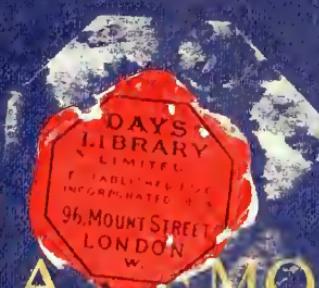
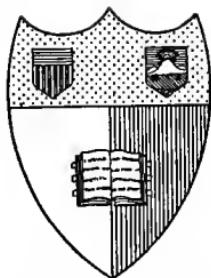


SOPHIA MATILDA PALMER COMTESSE DE FRANQUEVILLE



A MEMOIR
BY LADY LAURA RIDDING



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SOPHIA MATILDA PALMER
COMTESSE DE FRANQUEVILLE



Sophia Matilda Palmer
1889

Emery Walker ph.s.c.

SOPHIA MATILDA PALMER
COMTESSE DE FRANQUEVILLE

1852-1915

A MEMOIR

BY HER SISTER

LADY LAURA RIDDING

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

1919

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SOPHIA

Strong Son of God is Love, and she was strong
For she loved much, and served :
Rejoiced in all things human ; only wrong
Drew scorn as it deserved.
Fair gift of God is Faith ; 'twas hers to move
The mountains, and ascend
The paradise of Saints : which Faith and Love
Made even Death her friend.

ROBERT STAFFORD ARTHUR PALMER, 1915

PREFACE

THIS book owes its origin to recollections of my sister which I put together at the request, and for the use, of my brother-in-law, the Comte de Franqueville. It owes its publication to the hope felt by many who loved her, that the story of her life might inspire other souls struggling heavenwards, just as the force of her example and influence helped all with whom she had to do, whilst she was on earth among us. If this hope be fulfilled, this little contribution to the records of human experiences will not have been added uselessly.

I desire to offer my thanks to all the friends whose counsel and help have been of great assistance to me in various ways in the compilation of this Memoir. Especially do I recognize the gratitude which I owe to Lady Robert Cecil, Mademoiselle Mercédès de Gournay, Lady Grey, Messieurs Macmillan, Mrs Leigh Pemberton, Miss Edith Rickards, Lord Stanmore, Lord Tennyson, and my sister, Lady Waldegrave. But above all, I owe it to the Comte de Franqueville for allowing me to publish the engravings of the Château de Bourbilly and of the latest portrait of Sophia; and for his permission which enabled me to incorporate material and extracts from

the touching Memoir which he wrote of his wife, for private circulation among her French relations and friends. Without this assistance, I should have been unable to complete my portrait or to tell the story of my sister's years in France; and I am therefore greatly beholden to him.

LAURA ELIZABETH RIDDING.

March, 1919.

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SOPHIA MATILDA PALMER

COMTESSE DE FRANQUEVILLE

CHAPTER I

1852—1870

(AGE : ONE TO EIGHTEEN)

“As Christ showed men, by His own life on earth, the goodness and love and power and truth of God the Father in a way unknown before, so Christ uses us each by power from Himself, to show those with whom we live, in the way that they can best understand, the love of our Father Who is in Heaven, the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, the love and wonder-working power of the Holy Spirit. A good life teaches more than any sermon.”

These words were spoken by my sister to a large gathering of girls at the Nottingham Church Congress of 1897, as witness to her belief in the sacred mission to which she and her young audience alike had been called. It was this belief which made her life such a beacon of help to all around her; even now, when it is shrouded from our view, we can still delight in the illumination of the rays of light that shone forth from its bright radiance.

Sophia Matilda Palmer, the third child and daughter of Roundell and Laura Palmer, was born on a Sunday, November 14, 1852. At her baptism on December 14 she was given her name in memory of her great-great-aunt, Princess Sophia Matilda of Gloucester, for the

princess had always showed much kindness to her half-nephew, the eighth Earl of Waldegrave (our grandfather) and to all his family.

There was awaiting the little Sophia as inspiring a mental and spiritual inheritance as could be desired for any child of man. Both her father and mother were descended from ancestors who for many generations had striven to render faithful service to God and their King and Country. Her grandfather on her father's side, the Rev. William Joselyn Palmer (the third son of Mr William Palmer, of Nazeing Park, in Essex), was a man of the spiritual kinship of George Herbert. Although endowed with great intellectual powers combined with shrewd wisdom, judgment and gifts of influence, he was perfectly content to spend his whole life in the service of his isolated country parishes. He loved the flock committed to his charge, and they responded to his affection with the most absolute trust in his guidance. In the obscure villages of Mixbury and Finmere in Buckinghamshire, at a time when religious zeal was slack in God's Church, both in England and on the Continent, he accomplished a wonderful spiritual work for thirty-nine years among his rural parishioners. Of his relations to his own family, my father used to say that "For wisdom, humility, piety and tenderness of affection, he did not think he could be matched the whole world over."

With such an influence directing them, it is not wonderful that my father and his ten brothers and sisters grew up to be valuable godly men and women, whose memory is still held dear by all who knew them.

Their mother was Dorothea Richardson Roundell, the beautiful daughter of the Rev. William Roundell, of Gledstone, in the West Riding. She remains a paler figure in my memory, one who lived the life of a cherished invalid among her large family of able strenuous sons and daughters.

My father's published "Memorials" * preserve an interesting record of their lives and work, as well as of his own career from the days of his successes at school and college, to those of his achievements as Lord Chancellor of England. There is no need for me to speak here of his intellectual and moral endowments, which impressed his most intimate political friends "as an extremely rare combination of acuteness and subtlety of intellectual gifts with an intense love of and regard for truth."

"The presence of God was the supreme thought in his mind," was the judgment of Archbishop Benson on my father's life. "He might be compared with such a man as Sir Matthew Hale or Sir Thomas More, for he was a great man by his extraordinary acquirements."

This deep veneration, inspired by my father's character in those who shared the labours of his public life, was felt with greater intensity by his wife and children. Our home, like the "modest yet commodious mansion" at Chelsea of his great predecessor, was like it "a veritable school of Christian religion, irradiated by the same happiness, love, activities, and sober mirth."

This home was first made on February 2, 1848, when my father married my mother, Lady Laura Waldegrave, the second daughter of William, eighth Earl of Waldegrave, and of his wife Elizabeth, daughter of Samuel and Lady Elizabeth Whitbread, of Cardington, in Bedfordshire.

My mother's parents were both persons of deep religious convictions which blossomed in a vivid sense of duty and of social service. My grandfather, Vice-Admiral Lord Waldegrave, was a naval officer of high distinction. Among his achievements was his brilliant service when in command of *H.M.S. Revenge*

* "Memorials. Part I. Family and Personal, 1766-1825" (Macmillan, 1896); and "Memorials. Part II. Personal and Political, 1865-1895" (Macmillan, 1898).

at the bombardment of Acre in 1840. The inconveniently high standard of his strict religious life had exposed him to the taunts of his fellow-officers, who used to say that "a saint like Captain Waldegrave could not possibly fight!" He effectually silenced them by saving the day by his action in going to the relief of *H.M.S. Powerful* at a critical moment of the battle. His marriage with my grandmother had further intensified his religious character, as a pathetic letter written by him on the day of her death shows in its testimony to the beauty of her nature: "For more than thirty years we loved each other ardently. Her affection, her counsel, her duty were all sweetly combined and harmonized with the innocence and vigour of her life." She was a woman of great mental gifts, an able mathematician, a Greek, Latin, and Hebrew scholar, "so gentle, brave, sympathetic and spiritual, that her tone brought refreshment and spiritual strength to all who could claim friendship with her."

This ideal sympathy, with which God had blessed the wedded life of my grandparents, was bestowed by Him also on their children. Never was marriage crowned with more intimate and perfect happiness than that of my parents. On the twelfth anniversary of their engagement, my father, in verses dedicated to my mother, spoke of "all the wealth of happy years" which had flowed from that "golden hour."

"The trusting heart, the strengthening mind ;
The mutual constant prayer ;
Looks ever gentle, ever kind,
Which friends and brethren share.

"Whatever ties were close before
Still closer thou didst make ;
The best and truest learnt to love
More dearly for thy sake."

Thus he described my mother; and in touching words written soon after her death, he drew her

portrait as a character "naturally lively and high-spirited, but disciplined to a rare equability and consistency of character, with bright independent powers of judgment, a clear, direct, and practical understanding, a cultivated mind, generous sympathies, transparent sincerity, and a gift of friendship; one whose devotion to and affection for her husband and children knew no bounds, and who brought up her children wisely by love, not fear, and therefore had the comfort of seeing them all grow up to follow the example which she herself had set them, without ever causing their parents distress or trouble."

Sophia occupied the middle place in our family of four daughters and one son.* My mother was proud of her, as being much the biggest baby of us all: "a little Alderman," "a round cheese," "a handsome boy," were nicknames by which her aunts described her. When she was a few months old, my mother wrote of her: "You must make that jolly baby clap her hands and laugh! Is she not a very bright ray from the sun! Such a joyous little soul." She was very stately even as an infant. I remember her at between four and five years old as tall and large for her age, with a big head, a high forehead, very fair blonde hair arranged in funny fat curls on each side of her round cherubic face. Her pale grey eyes were beaming with intelligence and energy; and determination was written on every feature of her childish countenance.

One early recollection of her at the age of four, was her busying herself in the nursery kitchen, where she had betaken herself unknown to our

* 1. Laura Elizabeth, born 1849. Married Rev. Dr Riddings, 1876.
2. Mary Dorothea, born 1850. Married the Earl Waldegrave, 1874.
3. Sophia Matilda, born 1852. Married the Comte de Franqueville, 1903; died 1915.
4. Sarah Wilfreda, born 1854. Married Mr George Tournay Biddulph, 1883; died 1910.
5. William Waldegrave, born 1859. Married the Lady Maud Cecil, 1883.

nurse. My youngest sister, then a baby of two years old, trotted to and fro in such a state of babbling excitement that at last one of the nurses followed her, to see Sophia, a very Undine, seated dripping beneath a flowing water-tap, which her chubby fingers had turned on and had been unable to turn off again. The whole floor was a lake, and Sophia was vainly attempting to sop up the rising tide with all the nursery towels which she had surreptitiously collected. She greeted the horrified nurse with the words: "Oh, Harrie! you need not trouble yourself!" and she kept on repeating this assurance with the grandest air, to our great amusement, so the words became a joke with us elder children as an answer to all remonstrances: "You need not trouble yourself!"

According to our respective ages, we naturally paired off with our next sister; Mary and I, together, and Sophia and Freda; Freda also doing double duty as the special companion of our little brother. We were all of varying characters and temperaments; and our mother who, in her prayerful desire to train her children in holiness, love, and useful citizenship, studied our dispositions with minute care, had no cause to complain of the monotony of her task.

Sophia was distinguished by very marked characteristics from early days of infancy. There is no time of her life when my recollections of her are not associated with one or more of them. She displayed great mental ability, deep affections and emotions, impulsive generosity, an eager curiosity, a determined will, dramatic egoism, and absolute self-confidence. She suffered from constant mild attacks of physical discomfort as a child, presumably caused by her out-growing her strength. This combination of bodily delicacy and conflicting qualities demanded extreme wisdom in their educational treatment. Happily God met this need by providing Sophia with a supremely wise and holy guide in our mother.

From the outset she placed very high standards of thought and conduct before us. She instilled into us from infancy the lessons of obedience, self-control, reverence and trustworthiness. Our secular reading was jealously restricted and selected by our parents, who retained the direction of our religious instruction in their own hands throughout our childhood. Every week-day morning my mother heard our Bible reading and childish devotions; every Sunday afternoon between Church Services my father instructed us in Bible history and Christian dogma, regardless of any fatigue which he might be feeling from the unceasing strain of his laborious legal and parliamentary work.

My mother believed firmly that it was the duty of parents to support with utmost loyalty the authority of the nurses, governesses or masters deputed by them to train their children. The following passage from a letter written by her during Sophia's school-room days may be quoted here as a contrast to the frequent disregard of parents to this duty to their delegates:—

The Lady Laura Palmer to Sophia.

“6, Portland Place, London,
“November 2, 1866.

“I have thought very much of you all and longed to be at Blackmoor and hearing from Miss Helder* that you were all well and happy. I hoped that my dear Sophia was remembering the promise she made me more than once to try her best to be perfectly respectful to Miss Helder at all times and at all hours of the day and not to allow herself to be *rebellious* against an authority which I choose she should obey. If my four dear girls are respectful to Miss Helder and to those about them, they are doing two good things: 1, teaching their little brother to be deferential and respectful to authority; 2, they are making sure to be respected themselves; but if they

* Our governess.

do not try now to be respectful and are rude to Miss Helder or any one, I am quite positive that they will not grow up respected; on the contrary, they will *never* command respect and will *never* get it. So I hope for your brother's sake and for your own, you are all trying to be very respectful and *never* rude to Miss Helder. You will think Mamma has written a little sermon, but it was in my mind, and I hope God will bless it to all my children. My love to each one of you, and I wish each of my girls to read this letter through carefully more than once and to remember it. Love to Miss Helder and Meme,* and kisses to dear Willie. I am so thankful that Lolly can say he has been good over his lessons.

"Ever, dearest Sophia,
"Your fond Mother,
"L. PALMER."

Our London home was Number 6 (now 30), Portland Place, a house which my father took on a long lease in 1854, and which from that date to 1895 was Sophia's London home. It was a fine old Adams' house with lofty, spacious halls, staircase and rooms, dignified by their handsome mahogany doors, marble chimney-pieces, Italian painted walls, and beautifully decorated ceilings. From the balcony of our drawing-room we could look away from the further end of Portland Place, over what appeared to be continuous masses of woodlands, to the heights of Hampstead.

Here in this airy, roomy house we spent our school years, while our holidays were timed to coincide with our limited weeks in the country; and they were always determined by the Law Terms and their three holidays of Christmas, Easter, and the summer Long Vacation. Until we had a country home of our own, we used to spend our holidays at some quiet seaside locality, or in visits to some of our relations.

Of all our holiday resorts, Mixbury, our father's native place, afterwards the home of his brother, the

* Our nurse.

Rev. G. Horsley Palmer, was the one to which our supreme allegiance was given. We children thought that it was "the very nicest place in the world!" We loved the pleasant Rectory and its fragrant big garden, the old Norman church, the Castle hill with its mounds, moat and ruins, all softly embossed in sheep-nibbled turf; the quaint village street with its Elizabethan thatched cottages, stream and lofty elms beneath which still stood the ancient village stocks. The whole population, especially the rustic boys and girls, our contemporaries, were regarded by us as intimate friends. We were welcome guests at the open fireside settles of the cottagers; our eagerly proffered co-operation was warmly accepted in farmyard and garden, at the Village Feast and May-day games, and in the lace-schools, where women in neat goffered caps wove beautiful lace on pillows bedecked with ancient love-token bone bobbins, and taught the little village girls the dexterous art of lace-making. It is sad to remember that one unforeseen result of the American Civil War was the extinction of this village industry on account of the cotton famine. By the time we had grown up, the mischief was done, and very few of the Mixbury women continued to make lace.

Mixbury remained our special holiday home until 1866, when my father purchased the Blackmoor estate in Hampshire. Naturally from that time the paramount claims of our new home drew us there instead of to Mixbury. The new outlet for our affections with its demands on our service came at a critical time in Sophia's life. She was then fourteen years old, just emerging from a turbulent childhood. Very early in her life had the struggle for self-conquest begun. Her vehemently determined will and passionately ardent nature made her life from the days of infancy a difficult, and often unhappy, experience. When she was only three and a half our nurse married, and a young widow, Mrs

Petrie, came to rule our nursery in her stead. We all mourned over the loss of our dear Nana, but Sophia refused to accept her successor. She at once embarked on a struggle for mastery. Her toilette, meals, games were all made vocal with reiterated "Me won't's!" Meme (as we soon learnt to call Mrs Petrie) wore the opposition down by quiet kind firmness; and before many weeks were over Sophia had accorded to her her complete trust and love. She became a very dear friend to us all, but I think Sophia was the most passionately attached to her. Certainly her death in 1881 was a shock of agony of which Sophia could hardly speak for the rest of her own life.

Not being liable to be shaken by sudden gusts of temper I could not understand my poor little sister's outbursts, and I used to witness them in petrified amazement. They were certainly odd exhibitions. She would fling herself down on the ground in paroxysms of passion, rolling over and over again, perhaps down a grassy terrace or into a flower-bed. On one occasion when she was six years old she had indulged in one of these fits of wrath, and my father gravely invited her to come for a walk alone with him. Her guilty little conscience made her dread reproofs, so she locked herself into an empty room, from which, after what seemed to us an interminable time, she was extricated by the aid of the village carpenter. In spite of her desperate attempts to avoid it, the walk took place. To her relief my father did not allude to her naughtiness, but entertained her with a most interesting talk about the flowers and birds and objects which they saw on their walk. Her gratitude for his forbearance laid the foundation of the devoted admiration with which she always afterwards regarded him.

She was always hungry for the exclusive love of those who were dearest to her. She poured out her own love with no reserves, and sought to seat herself

on the inmost throne of the hearts of those she cared for, with an unconscious desire to possess their supreme affections. This temperament was another cause of perplexity and trial to her in life.

Her religious emotions were very early stirred, though I do not think that she absolutely surrendered herself to God's service until the time of her Confirmation ; but when she was only five years old my mother was greatly struck by the devotional bent of her mind. She wrote in a letter to her invalid sister, Lady Mary Waldegrave—

“Ask Bessie to tell you the story about Sophia looking at a print of our Lord praying in the Garden of Gethsemane ; it showed that dear little Sophia has thoroughly taken in the idea of our Lord's Divinity. She is getting on well in the schoolroom and shows great intelligence. Is not Sophia tall ? Her fault is pettishness and the dear child knows it, but it is a warfare.”

When Sophia was nearly six years old, just before my brother's birth, an event occurred which was burnt for ever into all our memories. We were staying with our parents at the Oatlands Hotel, near Walton. In the middle of the night, the part of the hotel in which our nurseries were situated burst into flames. I shall never forget the horrible appearance of the orange glare and fierce fire. We were hastily carried out of our beds to the further end of the hotel, and, so soon as we were dressed, into safety in the garden. We behaved very characteristically. I was very cross at being awakened out of my sleep ; Mary was greatly distressed about a poor invalid whom she had seen carried in a wheeled chair along the hotel corridors ; Sophia was remarkably cool and collected, and showed the most self-possession of all of us ; while little Freda kept on asking : “When they would b'ow the fire out ?”

Here are two letters belonging to 1862 and 1863, when Sophia was nine and ten years old.

Sophia to The Lady Laura Palmer.

“September 11, 1862.
“Aldeburgh.

“MY DEAR MAMA,

“As it is my turn to write, Miss Helder said I might do it on the beach. Baby was very good yesterday, and I hope he will be so to-day. I have tried to be obedient very hard and the other things too, especially to set baby a good example. I am learning the cxli. and Wilfreda the cxxxix. Psalms. We went out in the carriage yesterday, and to-day we are going to play at croquet. Last morning we did a few lessons and painted our maps of the world. Good-bye, dear Mama, give my love to dear Papa.

“I remain, your loving child,

“SOPHIA M. PALMER.”

“Set a wacht before my moth, O Lord, and keep the door of my lips.”

The Lady Laura Palmer to The Lady Mary Waldegrave.

“October 2, 1863.

“DEAREST SISTER,

“What do you say to my bringing Sophia with me when I come to stay with you? She will be very companionable and manageable, and will make herself really happy, I believe. She is very self-helpful, as was proved the other day by her getting up of her own accord at 5.30 a.m. to see her father and me off, dressed herself perfectly tidily, hair and all, made her appearance, and made breakfast for us. She likes to be useful. She has, I am thankful to say, wonderfully improved. So few tantrums now and so soon over ! ”

Three deep cravings possessed Sophia's soul from early girlhood: for the love of God, for sympathetic touch with her fellow-creatures, for service. They became the burning passions of her life as she grew up, vitalized by her determined will. The surrender

of that will was the discipline which God caused her to learn through many years of conflict; and her frequent failures in the struggle for submission created what she used to designate as "My foundation mistake." When she became a woman, she wrote the following entry in one of her private diaries:—

"I have loved God all my life, but I have not given up all for Him with my whole heart and soul and mind, for I have loved myself—my will too, and I have followed my will often and often instead of Him and His will—and this might have ruined me utterly—only from the earliest time I can remember, God—(why I can't tell—only because He is Love) has given me a aching longing for Himself—and through this I have been saved; for as often as—*after wilfully of my own free will*, I disobeyed, sinned, despaired—the very cause of the despair, the misery of being away from Him, and fearing I had lost Him and gone beyond forgiveness, brought me back again; and again and again and again He took me and gave me fresh desire and fresh hope, and so, somehow, the love of God strengthened slowly within me."

In another of her later writings she mentioned her recollections of "the sudden flash, with which the fact of Abstract Truth, the right and wrong of it, apart from any references or results, had come to her at eleven years of age." Other indications of her mental and spiritual growth at that age are given in the two following letters from her to her mother. They show the beginning of a missionary spirit and a keen desire for knowledge. They were written in March, 1864, from Norwood, where the three younger children under Memé's care were recruiting their strength after measles. Sophia had been greatly distressed during the services on Good Friday and Easter Day by the strange behaviour of a man who was near her in church, and whom she concluded could not be a Churchman. She wrote—

"It is so sad, I think; it made me think of the Collect for Good Friday, 'Under one Shepherd and one fold.' And I prayed to God that the poor man and the two little Jewesses might all be gathered under one shepherd and one fold—the little Jewesses at my French class. Do you know, dear Mama, when I was in bed I heard the Angels sing Hallelujah. Oh! it was so very, very, very beautiful. Oh! so so very beautiful that I have never heard anything like it. God was so very kind to me to let me hear it.

"Your fond and loving child,
"SOPHIA MATILDA PALMER."

"DEAR PAPA AND DEAR MAMA,

"I will write to you both as it is both your turn. This afternoon we went in the carriage for a drive, and the coachman took us to the Nunhead Cemetery, and we saw a great many beautiful graves and many monuments. Amongst the most beautiful of the monuments was one which had a most beautiful inscription, and it was this: 'In memory of the Scottish Politicle Martyrs. The experience of all ages *should* have taught our rulers that persecutions cannot efface Principles. Persecutions can never efface Truth. Gerald's Duffence.' On the other sides were written the names of the Martyrs, Jomas, Fisher, Palmer. Several others. 'Vollentery Contributions. Sir Joseph Hume, Chairman.' Will you please write and tell me about them."

She loved to scribble endless letters, and was ecstatically grateful for a desk which my mother gave her.

"Dear Mother," she poured out her rhapsody, "Thank you from Willie for your letter. I need not tell you how beautiful it was, for so they always are. Oh, my desk! the only one in the world, so nice and delicious! Since you spoke lessons have gone on so well. I have done my urn-stand, four big texts, one marker, and nearly one bead mat. I have been really not idle, have I? Love to all.

"S. M. P."

On July 18, 1865, Sophia had the first of four remarkable escapes from violent death. My mother and she were driving in an open carriage in the Strand. They got out at a shop in a small street leading out of the Strand, where some old houses were being pulled down. Hardly had they passed the threshold when, with a thundering noise amid clouds of dust, two of the houses crashed forward into the street, over the exact spot where one minute before the carriage had drawn up. The coachman and horses escaped destruction by a hair's-breadth.

During the Sixties the craze for "collecting" and for forming "Societies" was universal among our contemporaries. In 1862 I began to collect crests and monograms; Mary, postage stamps; and Sophia, autographs. In 1866, she, Mary, and Freda joined a "Question Society," and I think she also founded one of her own at the same time that I became a founder of a Sketching Society. Sophia's letters of 1866 and 1867 bristle with miscellaneous questions upon the Name of Pharaoh's Daughter, the Origin of Hot-Cross-Buns, the meaning of Whigs and Tories, the mention of Soap in the Bible, the Apogee of the Moon, the Orders of the Garter, Bath, and Thistle, etc., which had all been sent in to her Society.

The letters also bristle with most embarrassing suggestions of impracticable plans, the produce of Sophia's fertile imagination. Many were the disappointments which she brought upon herself by her persistent determination to carry out these schemes, for my mother was reluctantly obliged, week after week, to shatter whole avenues of Sophia's air-castles. One of them, I remember, was a suggestion that my mother should give our governess an extra month's holiday, and that Sophia should be made responsible for all arrangements during her absence. Another, written from a friend's house where she was staying, asked permission for her to visit a neighbouring coach-builder's shop and select

a dog-cart for her personal use. Other proposals were built in entire disregard of time or space, two human limitations which their architect, throughout her whole life, was always unwilling to accept. Each castle which fell about her ears brought bitter sorrow in its fall. My mother knew this, and always felt a sad amusement in the remonstrances which she found it necessary to repeat again and again. "Sophia, dear!" she would say, "I think you expect to compass sea and land!" for her proposals, which now-a-days might possibly be within the power of an airship to accomplish, were certainly not within that of our earth-bound carriage and pair!

Sophia wrote from Norwood, on March 26, 1866, reminding her mother that—

"You said that perhaps we should have a party when we come back to London, and I suppose you will have your table of presents for everybody as usual.* If so, do you remember that you said that you would (if you could) let me be with you when you get them (I mean the presents), so, as things are so cheap here, may I get some things for you, for tumbridgewellware and scotchware are sold for half what they are in London? If I may, please how much shall I spend?"

In a letter written to her mother from London on June 13, 1866, she gives a minute account of exactly what her father had eaten for breakfast, and goes on—

"I try to make up to him for you, as much as is in my power; but who in this world could *possibly* do such as that, considering there is no one in this world as good and nice as you and Papa. Good-bye, dearest mother.

"I am for ever and ever your loving girl,
"S. M. PALMER."

On April 24, 1867, she wrote from Alresford, where she was staying with an aunt—

* This was a very popular part of my mother's programme whenever she gave juvenile parties.

"Dearest of all mothers, it is great fun here, but I trust you have taken my very, very good advice about Miss Helder's not coming home till the others. I know from most good authority that it takes at least three weeks (a month is better) to get out of feeling fagged. I have and do find it by experience. I will be very good and stay upstairs if you like and arrange curiosities and illuminate and walk all day. Do you know that Aunt Maria* thinks *jolly* an authodox word as in an old manuscript of St Luke it says: 'And the disciples were *jolly* glad.' We had *such* charades! And there will be, D.V., a party here on Thursday. Aunt Maria is going to try to let me go to Winchester to see the Cathedrall. Cathedralls are so dear. Mr Sumner† asked me what Papa thought of the Reform Bill, and I did not know, but I said I thought he liked it in a moderate degree. We cooked a tart, pudding, biscuits, and gingerbread nuts yesterday. It was such fun."

It was about this time that Mary and Sophia were allowed to begin to visit the Men's Accident Ward in the Middlesex Hospital. They continued to do this together till 1874, when, after Mary's marriage, Freda took her place. The visits were paid regularly every week during the months of our residence in London. The girls always made a point of wearing their prettiest dresses on these occasions, because they noticed that all the other visitors looked "such frumps; and the patients told them that they did enjoy the sight of their young faces and smiles and charming frocks!" Some years after, on the occasion of one of the Royal Garden Parties at Buckingham Palace, I recollect that Sophia delighted her sick men by going first to the ward to show them her pretty finery.

On June 24, 1868, Sophia was confirmed in All Souls' Church, Langham Place, by Bishop Anderson.‡ She had deepened much in the previous year in her

* Lady Maria Brodie.

† Afterwards Bishop of Guildford.

‡ Formerly Bishop of Rupertsland.

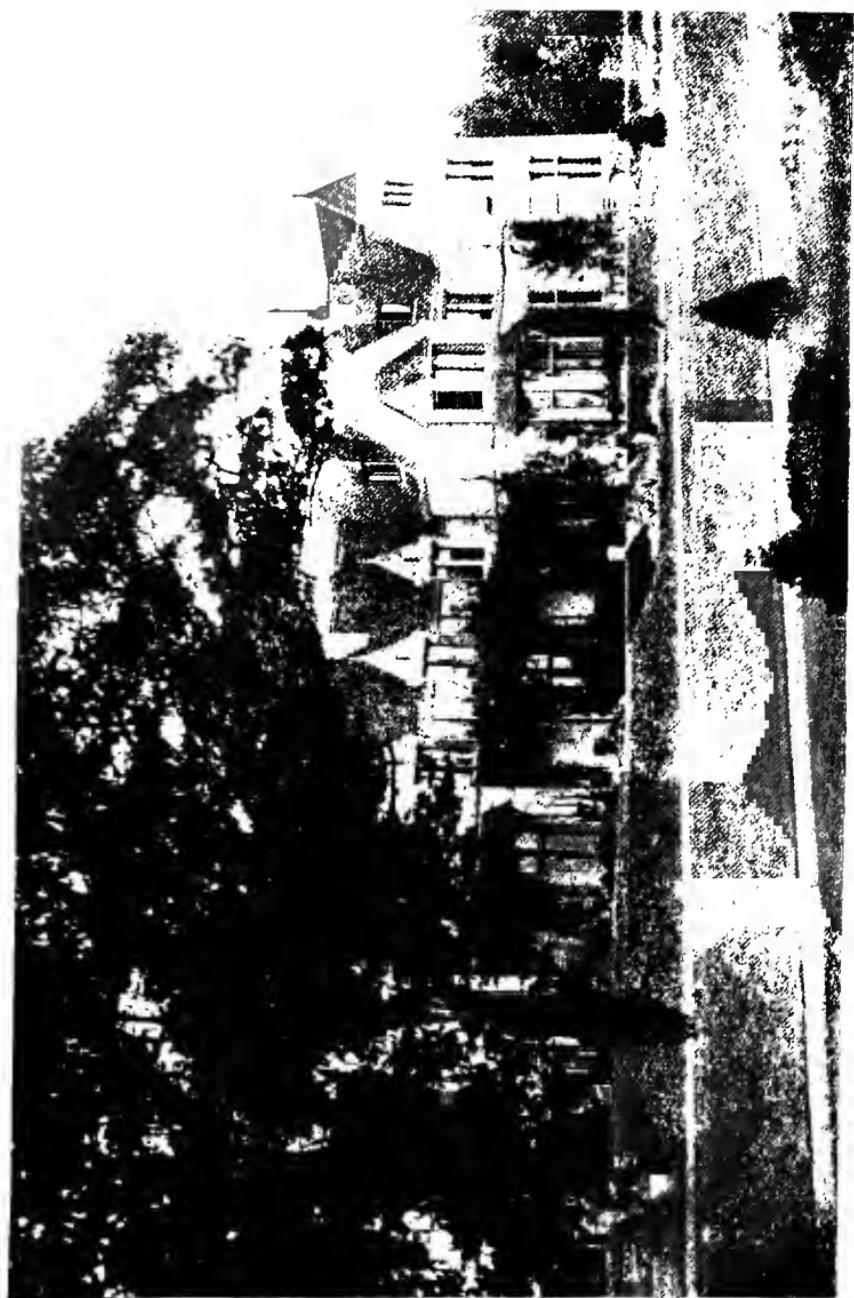
character. "Since the time I was fifteen years old, I felt God's hand upon me," she used to say in later life. My mother wrote to our invalid aunt Mary Waldegrave an account of my sister's Confirmation.

"Dear Sophia was much affected by her Confirmation. A thrill went through one when she knelt at the rails. May it be an invigorated start. . . . The dear child has come on wonderfully in character, it is impossible not to notice it, and instead of being forward and pettish and imagining injuries, she is just the contrary; and her mind is growing too. Lolly thinks there is a good deal of power about her. Of course they are only budding, but if it is so, I shall say indeed: Thank God!"

And in another letter: "Sophia and I have had a good talk after one of her effervescences, and she volunteered that I was right in not yielding to her weakness."

These continual childish struggles, trying as they must have been to Sophia and to all in authority over her, were important factors in the making of her character. Heights, such as those attained by her in later life, are never reached without great conflict; and those pilgrims are fortunate who enter on their conflict while they are children, under the guardianship of their parents their natural guides and champions, during the early period of their life's journey over the Hill Difficulty and through the Valley of Humiliation.

I have mentioned the fact that my father bought the Blackmoor estate in Hampshire in 1866. It consisted of four large farms, with hop-gardens, grass-land, woods, and forest moorland. Before he set to work to build his own house, he provided the property with labourers' cottages, schools, a church and vicarage. The house in which we took up our residence was a roomy farmhouse on the edge of Wolmer Forest, built on the site of an ancient Roman



BLACKMOOR HOUSE, 1873.

settlement, and within a stone's throw of what my father believed to be the site of the battlefield where the army of Constantius Chlorus, under Asclepiodotus, defeated Allectus in A.D. 297. Wild moorland surrounded the house on three sides, while on the west was a small island ringed in by a moat, on which were traces of a Roman villa. Beyond the island stretched an oak-wood which led up to the chalk "hanger" of Temple, at the top of which were remains of a well and buildings, indicating that the Knights Templars had once lived there. The country was very lovely with hills, hangers, rolling forest-land, and soft grey outlines of the Sussex Downs far away.

Sophia was captivated by its charm, and her affections flowed out in eager waves both to the country-side and to its rural inhabitants. She had learnt to sympathize with the struggles and hardships of the poor of London, through impressions received by her when she accompanied my mother on her regular visits to certain East End parishes, where the Parochial Mission Women (of whom my mother was one of the lady managers) worked under the direction of the clergy. She had known and loved the agricultural labourers and their families at Mixbury. Now she delighted in making acquaintance with my father's new Hampshire tenants, and it would be difficult to decide whether our governess, Miss Helder, or her pupils showed the greater enthusiasm in this fresh beginning of friendship-weaving.

Sophia to The Lady Laura Palmer.

"November 13, 1866.
"Blackmoor.

"MY DARLING MOTHER,

"Miss Helder says she hopes she has arranged as you like about Charlotte Easter, and she has told her to be here punctually at eleven o'clock

to go with us up to London, and then Miss Helder says that she or somebody will see her safe to Margaret Street. The poor girl looks so happy and grateful! On Saturday Miss Helder went a good round of good-byes and took me with her. It was *such* a nice walk and I'll tell you all we did. First we went to give our things to Mrs Lupin, who, you know, is taking her little child Caroline up to London on Wednesday, to Guy's Hospital. We found there a wedding party of friends, so we gave the things and left. Then we went to say good-bye to Mrs Black. After that we went to Mrs Hole and gave her a pair of shoes and a pinafore for a little boy and a pair of Willie's old boots for a little girl of hers. Then we went to Mrs Stall and left another pinafore there. Then we went to Mrs Hole (the woman is mother to the other and her husband works for Papa), and there we saw her at tea with her two grand-children and her mother. She told Miss Helder she had reared eleven children, and was now keeping (for good) her mother and three grand-children. Her mother is ninety-six and such a dear old woman and looked so neat and nice. She had a bonnet on with nice white cap and tidy comfortable dress, and she told Miss Helder she had lost all her teeth, and Miss Helder said she was not half so old and she had very few left! Then we went past Oakhanger Pond, and there in two nice big tenements we saw in one an old woman of eighty-nine and in the other a young woman. Then we had a long walk home by Sandy Lane, and on nearing home we met the wedding party, and with them Mrs Lupin and her child. They looked *so* tidy and nice. Mrs Lupin had a clean lilac print on and a plain cloth cloak and a white straw bonnet with a green ribbon on it. She was carrying her child who had on my red petticoat and over that a neatly made frock made of a piece of old-fashioned silk that had been given her to go up to the Hospital in, and a thick jacket and straw hat quite plain!

"I am really good about reading, and do you know, Mama, that now I have begun and I am as wrapt up in 'The Geological Staircase' as even a story-book, and it satisfies me much more! I have not finished it

and may I have it for the journey? I did *so* like your dear sermon really, and I keep on reading it and I *must* tell you not to call it a sermon for it wasn't."

My mother sent the following answer to this letter:—

"6, Portland Place, W.
"November 13, 1866.

"Your letter received this morning did give me such pleasure. It was such a nice cheerful letter full of what I like to hear, and no folly in it of any kind. I am so glad that you like 'The Geological Staircase.' I am quite sure if you take to reading like that, you will be a very happy girl as it will give your mind something to think of profitable, and God has blessed you with a good understanding, and He expects you to turn it to good account, and to put useful furniture into it! and if you do that you will have no time to make troubles. To-morrow is your birthday, dear child, and I shall think of you and pray God to give you a happy and unselfish and contented disposition, and make you His more and more, and give you grace to persevere in doing right more and more."

Sophia makes mention in her letter of her reading. She was a voracious reader, and devoured more books in a week than Freda could plod through in half a year. Sophia's interest in literature of all kinds, in politics and in social occurrences, made her conversation, even at the immature age of fourteen, very attractive to other girls of the same age. "I was always so delighted when it was my chance to pair with Sophy in our schoolroom walks," recalled one of these early friends. "I thought her so clever and so interesting. And she was so generous. I shall never forget how, when once I told her how I longed to have a big doll like hers, the very next day Sophy actually gave me her own doll, to my intense delight!"

Her conversation was occasionally of a bomb-throwing character. She would sit abstracted, following out some train of thought, and then unexpectedly blurt out her conclusions in a manner that

startled her unprepared audience. I remember how one day a general conversation was going on at luncheon ; Sophia alone had taken no part in it. She was absorbed in considering a rather florid account of a wedding which she had just read in a newspaper. She suddenly flung a verbal shell across the table at an elderly unmarried guest. "Miss Oldfield ! Would *you* like to be 'led' like a victim to the 'hymeneal altar' ? I think it's horrible ! "

She early learnt the art of adapting her conversations to suit her companions with a skill that might have been envied by much older people. Once when some visitors were calling on my mother, she heard Sophia discussing with one of them the merits of "Adam Bede," a work which she had not read and would not probably be permitted to read for several years. Nevertheless she steered the conversation through the shoals of her ignorance with the same masterly skill as that of the legendary Don, who gave a course of Science Lectures on a subject about which he knew nothing.

1868 was the date of the separation of Blackmoor from the mother parish of Selborne, and its creation into an independent parish, provided with a church and endowment by my father. Its first vicar was the Rev. George Edward Jelf.* His advent brought a new influence into our lives ; I think most markedly into Sophia's. She was always keen to acknowledge how greatly he had helped her spiritual life. His teaching, supplementing the religious instruction she had had regularly from our parents, had the vital effect of enabling her to apprehend the deep reality of the Incarnation of our Lord ; and its consequence to herself of ever-renewed grace through the Blessed Sacrament ; and this apprehension quickened into intense energy her dormant love and devotion to our Lord.

* Afterwards Canon of Rochester and Master of the Charter-house.

At the beginning of Mr Jelf's ministrations in a district hitherto out of reach of any spiritual or educational influences, he naturally found very few available helpers; but among his earliest recruits were Miss Helder, Sophia and Freda. He employed them particularly in visiting the sick and teaching the children of Oakhanger, a forest hamlet lying at the furthest extremity of the parish. Here Sophia learnt to know the rural labourers' views of life, expressions and range of thought, with familiar intimacy, rarely reached by women outside their own social order. This understanding made it possible for her, when she became older, to discuss frankly social, political and religious questions with them in terms which they really understood, and thus to get to the heart of their convictions with extraordinary success.

The same power of projecting her imagination beyond the focus of her own point of view into that of other people helped her at this early date to realize the outlook of the servants of the household. The interest thus awakened remained vivid and unabated throughout her life. In the summer of 1868 Sophia wrote from Blackmoor to her mother describing a cricket match where the nine-year-old Willie captained a team composed of our men and maid servants.

"Jane, Anne, Sally, and Eliza enjoyed themselves very much. Mrs Baron [the housekeeper] is so kind about letting the maids go out. Since you have gone they have had two such long walks besides yesterday's cricketing. They are all so happy that they say they cannot help singing, so every night since you left they have sung hymns together from the time our tea was cleared till evening prayers. It sounds so sweet. The other day when they came home from a walk they brought us such beautiful wild flowers which they said they had picked for us, which was so kind. You needn't fear for Sally, for this morning she said she thought she was the best

off person, for it was nice work washing up and not messing, like Jane, with flour and such things. On Sunday I was quite bewildered, for after their dinner all the servants came at once asking to change their books. There is a perfect rage after them."

The year 1868 was memorable as the date of Mr Gladstone's first Premiership. My father was invited to take his place in the Cabinet as Lord Chancellor, but he refused the honour because of his conscientious opposition to the proposed disestablishment and disendowment of the Irish Church, a measure to the carrying out of which Mr Gladstone was committed. Many of his personal friends were included in the new ministry, among them Mr Cardwell, the Minister of War. He was always very kind to us children; and when he now took office, Sophia, with characteristic daring, immediately embarked on a bold adventure in regard to him.

Among our contemporaries at that time we claimed a great friendship with a charming young subaltern, named Ormelie Hannay.* At the time of the formation of Mr Gladstone's Cabinet, Ormelie had just joined his regiment, the 93rd Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. I recollect his telling us with boyish eagerness about a vacant piece of ground belonging to the War Office which lay close to the barracks, and which he and his fellow-officers coveted for a cricket ground. "You shall have it!" declared the valiant sixteen-year-old Sophia. Without telling any of us of her intention, she wrote direct to the new War Minister, demanding the grant of this plot of ground for the use of the Sutherland Highlanders. Some days after she had sent her request, my father was surprised at receiving a letter from Mr Cardwell, with some caustic advice in it to very young ladies not to interfere in matters which did not concern them!

The lesson was valued by Sophia, as it made her

* Colonel Hannay was killed in the battle of Paardeberg on February 18, 1900.

realize that less crude attacks would probably carry greater chances of success ; but it did not tame her audacious courage, which always during her whole life, after every rebuff, to borrow a favourite comparison of Ormelie Hannay's, " bobbed up again like a cork on the waves ! "

That brave soldier's face is one only in memory's long gallery crowded with portraits of Sophia's friends. She had already formed several life-long intimacies which were destined to shed richness and enjoyment on the coming years. Sophia had assuredly a genius for Friendship, which became, in her use of it, a bundle of sweet spices, of blended generosity, sympathy, comprehension, toleration, faithfulness, while at its centre lay the intense interest felt by her in all human life. After her death her much-beloved step-daughter, Madame Darcy, wrote of her—

"*Ces natures courageuses et encourageantes font tant de bien autour d'elles ; elles ont toujours à donner et on vient puiser à cette source qui semble inépuisable.*" This welling fount of sympathy began its flow in these days of early girlhood.

During the later days of her schoolroom life, Sophia's condition was tranquil and happy. She had, at last, settled comfortably into her own special place in the family. Her younger sister regarded her with adoring admiration, and her elder sisters began to find her an agreeable and interesting companion. Her friends returned her love with eager devotion. Her mind was satisfied : she was keenly interested in her studies of composition, history, philosophy, theology, literature, and all the country objects which were a source of ever-increasing delight to her at Blackmoor. Life now revealed itself to her as bubbling over with agitating interests ; so that, when on November 14, 1870, the eighteenth anniversary of her birth was reached, it found her standing with " clear and open soul " on the threshold of Life's crowded halls which she was about to enter.

Sophia brought to her conquest of the world an irrepressible supply of nervous and physical energy, which she always expended lavishly. "I am quite strangely wonderfully well," she eagerly explained. "Yesterday I felt that wonderful strange blessedness of being alive! So alive, all over me: a sort of fore-taste of immortality, I think, when to be living is joy! It comes every now and then, and it is wonderful." She felt herself charged with such incessant activities that she used to wish "that she had half a dozen bodies to her one soul!" a wish not echoed by her mother, who thankfully accepted the corporeal restrictions of a daughter always desirous to disregard them. Sophia's whole mind was suffused with enthusiasms for Causes, Persons, Politics, Knowledge, Books, Poetry, Art. Her strong emotions were occasionally charged with morbidity. The worship of her Church, her warm affections and service for all whom she loved, stirred the innermost depths of her being. The beauty of scenery, architecture, colour, form; the sentiment of places, of mute family relics, set her heart beating with loyal response. Side by side with this inherited reverence for tradition and antiquity, she developed the engrained intuitions of a collector, shown in her wisdom as a young girl in deciding to make her "collection" one of autographs, and in precocious appreciation of the worth of old lace, china, furniture, and fabrics. I never understood why, with her strong instincts for line and colour, she made so few attempts to paint and none to sculpture. The outlet in which they expressed themselves was through her admirable talent for arrangement of rooms, of flowers, and of drapery. This I have never seen surpassed.

Two other results of her emotional and artistic senses may be notified, namely, her sentiments on the symbolism of clothes, and her clear-cut preferences in dress. Her dress was often daring, a little fantastic, but frequently most successfully effective. For her

own wear she generally chose white, or cool greys or blues, hues well suited to her pale complexion. She had short, thick, fair hair, which she wore in twists and puffs, according to the fashion of that day. She would take sudden freaks of arranging it in some fantastic tangle over her forehead (another passing mode), and if her sisters disapproved, she invariably explained that "the wind had blown it into that shape!" She was tall and stately, with a long neck, an oval face, with thoughtful luminous grey eyes, a Madonna forehead and a delightful smile which irradiated her whole countenance. She moved beautifully, and I have heard her compared by different friends to a swan, a gazelle, and a tall Mary lily, each in its way a true comparison. Another friend, recalling her first meeting with my sister, said that, "She impressed me as being the most graceful woman I had ever seen in my life." Possibly Sophia inherited her slender figure and grace from her great-grandmother, the loveliest of the three sisters, the Ladies Waldegrave, whose beauty was immortalized by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Sophia loved walking, and when mentally tired she rested herself by rushing off for a rapid ten miles' walk; a form of repose I never attempted to share. As might be expected from one with her powerful dramatic sense, she was a clever amateur actress. We used often to act plays at Blackmoor during the Christmas festivities. I remember how Sophia brought down the house in 1878, when "She stoops to Conquer" was acted, and she was cast for the character of Mrs. Hardcastle; and in 1880, when, at the coming of age of my brother, "The Rivals" was performed. Sophia took the part of Mrs. Malaprop, Freda and Mary those of Lydia Languish and Julia, while among the other actors were the now renowned Sir Frank Benson as Faulkland, Lord Curzon as Sir Lucius O'Trigger, and Sir William Anson as Fag.

With all her activity Sophia cared nothing for

athletic games, danced heavily, and was the only one of us who never rode. Possibly her abstention was due to her strange aversion to animals. She, who loved all human beings so warmly, had no sympathy or friendship to bestow on animals. She simply disregarded them; and when their companionship was forced upon her, she shrank from them in disgust. "They smell!" was her censorious verdict.

Her ignorance of the nature and habits of birds and beasts occasionally led her into strange experiences. I recollect how once for a short time she went in for somewhat vague poultry-keeping. One day my mother got a startled letter from her saying—

"There is nothing domestic to tell you excepting that I have experienced a great shock in the poultry line. You know owing to foxes my Aylesburys diminished a year ago to three mallards. So there they were. Suddenly Weston informs me that I have a little family of Aylesburys. It was so odd! I then discovered that he had effected an exchange without telling me this autumn. I am so glad, but so surprised!"

Another time when we four sisters were dining alone together she had been deputed to order the dinner. As we had sat down to table with healthy appetites, we felt consternation on beholding, when the cover was removed from the *pièce de resistance*, one microscopic bird reposing on an island of toast. Freda rose to the occasion by remarking: "If it is not greedy I should like the beak!" Sophia's apology was unconvincing: "It's a *Jack snipe*! I thought with such a name it must be a big bird!"

On another occasion she came downstairs one morning full of admiration at her own presence of mind. She related to us the clever trick by which she had frightened away some mice which had come scampering into her room in the dark. "I got out of bed and crawled on all fours round the room miouwing like a cat! And it was so chilly!" It had not

occurred to her to miouw from the depths of her warm bed.

Flowers she loved passionately, and bestowed on them the tender love that other people lavish on their dogs and other pets.

Such were some of Sophia's characteristic qualities when she was eighteen years old. They combined strong attraction towards God and towards struggling human souls; intense emotional and artistic sympathies, a deep interest in national politics, hunger for knowledge, restless energy of mind and body, all mingled with the queerest pungent prejudices, fancies and enthusiasms. She was like a cedar-panelled room in which leather books, pot-pourri, incense, tobacco, flowers, and hot sunshine all blend their varying fragrance together.

CHAPTER II

1870—1878

(AGE : EIGHTEEN TO TWENTY-SIX)

BETWEEN 1871, the date of Sophia's débüt, and 1885, the date of my mother's death, lay fourteen years full of important political and family events. Among these may be mentioned the Geneva Arbitration on the Alabama Claims, Irish troubles and legislation, and the periods of my father's first and second Chancellorship; the marriages of my sister Mary to our cousin, Lord Waldegrave, of mine to the Rev. Dr Riddig, of Freda to Mr George Biddulph, and of Willie to Lady Maud Cecil; the births of four grandchildren; my father's illness in 1881, and my mother's illnesses which culminated in her death in 1885.

During these years Sophia's own life was gathering fulness and richness from many sources, from friendships, from work, from travels and from suffering. She and I were now thrown much more together as companions than had been the case in our schoolroom days. In certain aspects our relations to each other were those of originator and developer. Ideas of friendships to be pursued, of kindnesses to be undertaken, sketched out by me as vague suggestions, were often carried out later by her in beautiful completeness, I filling the part of architect, and she of builder, of our plans. I remember how the architect used to admonish and criticize the builder in a way that an older woman might have resented; but Sophia took my fussings in good part, and responded enthusiastically to my conceptions.

"You cannot tell how I love you, how intensely, nor what a great help and comfort God has given me in you," she wrote to me in a birthday letter. "If He wills it, I hope you may have joy on joy your life through to Eternity."

In 1872, when she was nearly twenty years old, Sophia, Willie and I accompanied our parents in the middle of July to Geneva, where the Alabama Conference * held its sessions, to spend the final ten weeks there before the pronouncement of the award by the Tribunal of the Arbitrators.

It was our first visit to the Continent, and my impressions are vividly clear in my memory. Paris still bearing the cruel marks of the recent war, the Place Vendôme (upon which the windows of our hotel looked), heaped with the great masses of the fallen column, the Tuileries, the Hotel de Ville and other public buildings standing in blackened ruins with placards of *Liberté, Egalité et Fraternité* flaunting over their shattered walls; the hot journey across France and the Jura Mountains; the incredible sight of the Mont Blanc range, "its central dome of snow and the spires of its *aiguilles* rising from behind Mont Mole, all aflame with crimson, scarlet, gold against the sunrise pale, blue-green sky," with the glittering Lake Leman in the foreground, spread out before our hotel windows, a daily sight for mortal eyes to gaze upon—these earliest impressions bit deep into Sophia's and my soul. Our quarters at Geneva were in the Hôtel des Bergues, where the English Arbitration party were all lodged. To our big hotel rooms every week came great hampers of wild flowers, sent to my mother by Mr. Wills,† a member of the Alpine Club, who had built himself a

* This conference arbitrated on the claims of the United States against Great Britain for breaches of neutrality during the American Civil War of 1862-1865. My father acted as Counsel for the British Government before the Tribunal of Arbitration.

† Afterwards Mr. Justice Wills.

charming chalet called The Eagle's Nest, on the top of a crag in the Valley of Sixt. For the first time were thus revealed to us the glories of Alpine flowers, gentians blue and yellow, Alpen roses, exquisite saxifrages, campanula, dryas octopetala and other lovely blossoms. Sophia shared my mother's passionate love of wild flowers, and delighted in the weekly task of illuminating the ugly rooms with masses of these jewelled petals. Now and then, in rare intervals between the sessions, my father or some of the Nestors of the party took us on charming excursions to Chamounix, the Bernese Oberland, Lausanne, and other beautiful places within nearer reach of Geneva. On these occasions I sketched while Sophia botanized with my father, and Willie fished or caught butterflies. The kind friendliness shown to us by the whole English party was enchanting. From the youngest Foreign Office clerk, the Hon. Francis Villiers,* up to the aged head of our English party, the arbitrator, Sir Alexander Cockburn, we met with nothing but the most delightful camaraderie. Sir Alexander was frequently very petulant and irritable with the world in general, because of his wrathful sense of dishonesty in the intolerable claims set forth by the American side in respect to twelve disallowed ships, because of his anger at what he considered to be a culpable lack of judicial impartiality in his four co-arbitrators, and because of the criminal toughness of the Swiss mutton—but to us girls he always showed the airy chirpiness of a friendly canary. My father pleased us greatly by assuring us that we were really useful, not only as helpers to my mother in the social duties which fell to her lot, but also as bringing relaxation and enjoyment into the lives of a dozen overworked men. We tried to help our mother in her assiduous efforts to promote the spirit of friendliness and cordiality between our English party and those of the

* Now British Minister to Belgium.

Swiss, Brazilian, Italian, and especially of the American arbitrators. We girls enjoyed this pleasant interchange of amenities with an eager delight, while fully appreciating our opportunities of participating in the conversations, bright with amusing stories, flashes of wit, and discussions on politics and literature, which took place on our evenings at home whenever our brilliant English group were granted relaxation from their weary wrestlings with the interpretations of international law.

Sophia gained great popularity from her ready powers of enjoyment and her quaint views and amusing talk. The young philistines of our party were vastly entertained by her seemingly inexhaustible flow of words. I remember how, on the occasion of a big dinner-party given to the English contingent by the American arbitrator, Mr Adams and his wife, some of them, with the diabolical enjoyment of amateurs in torture, watched Sophia enduring the agonies of dumbness through all the courses between the *hors d'œuvres* and the coffee. When at length we left the dining-room she was white with suppressed speech. On our way home two of the young men asked her compassionately to tell them the cause of her looking so miserable. Sophia burst forth: "It was a horrible experience! Young Mr O—, the American, who took me down to dinner, began with the soup: 'Miss Sophia Palmer, do you know "Paradise Lost"?' I said: 'I'm afraid not well. I have never read it all.' 'Then,' said he, 'I will recite it to you!' And he did recite it straight away through the whole dinner. We had reached the Third Book, and Satan had begun his flight earthward, when the interminable dinner ended!"

On September 14 we and my mother and the ladies of the foreign parties were present on the historical occasion of the pronouncement of the Judgment of the Arbitration Tribunal.

On the 16th we left Geneva. Sophia and I felt

great regret at the termination of this most enjoyable episode, but no other member of our party shared it. My mother felt ill from the oppressive heat, and my father and the other men were exhausted by their incessant labours in the torrid zone of Geneva, described by my father in a *jeu d'esprit* on the Arbitration, which he wrote for Sophia's autograph book as—

“ . . . the City of Noises, where Freedom rejoices
All through the long summer to drive away sleep.”

On reaching England two days later, my father was met by a letter from Mr Gladstone, asking him to allow him to submit his name to the Queen for the office of Lord Chancellor which Lord Hatherley was resigning on account of ill-health. The Queen strongly approved of the suggestion, and summoned my father to attend her in Council at Balmoral on October 15, when she transferred the Great Seal into his care.

In the interval we entered into possession of our delightful new home at Blackmoor. It was the last of the buildings erected there by my father, a comfortable grey-stone house with tiled roof incorporating the farm-house which we had originally occupied. On September 24, the Bishop of Winchester dedicated the house with a service specially compiled for the occasion, praying that our home should always be for us and for succeeding generations a House of Service to God. On the top beam of the entrance to the great chimney corner of the central hall, my father had caused to be carved the text: “*Ego autem et domus mea serviemus Domino.*”

My father's first Chancellorship lasted sixteen months. In that time he was able to pilot his great Judicature Act safely through Parliament, notwithstanding the exceptionally heavy pressure of judicial work that fell to his share on account of illness among the judges. The Long Vacation added to his strain by double anxiety on account of the Wigan railway accident, from which Willie and Freda escaped

all injury as if by a miracle ; and of our mother's danger from a severe operation which she was obliged to undergo directly we returned to Blackmoor. Her serene unselfishness and incessant watchfulness over my father's welfare made her, in the supreme moments of crisis, think first of him. "Be very courteous and attentive to the doctors and relieve your father of the necessity of entertaining them," was her special injunction to her daughters. In our agony of suspense we did as she desired ; and in the long hours before their train was due, we carried them off for walks about the garden and woods. We never forgot the horrors of that brilliantly beautiful day. The air was full of the resinous leafy odour which hot autumnal suns draw out of firs and young oaks. The black-coated Fates, who strolled along by our sides, looked aliens among the sweet blazing flower-beds. I remember how one of them talked of the universe as if it merely existed as a place in which to inhale chloroform, and how deliciously the laughing contradiction of this nightmare aspect was silently conveyed to our poor stunned hearts by great whiffs of scent-laden air, that blew around us as with balm of healing.

My mother inspired us all with an adoring love, such as, I think, is only called forth in an innermost family circle by an absolutely sincere nature. What Sophia's feelings now were for her, with whom she used in her childish days to wrestle in stubborn will-struggles, are shown by the following extracts from a letter written by her on the eve of St Valentine in the winter after this illness :—

" It's ridiculous saying what you know so well," she explained, " only I feel as if it were bursting over, and I must relieve myself! My dearest Mother, Sweet Valentine, I should say, I love you so much, as children say, and kiss you in spirit. This is private, Valentines always are, you know. I do thank you as much as I can for all your life-long love and

goodness to me. I know you are 'Mother,' but there must be times when even a mother's love is tried intensely, and I should think must fail, were it not for the divinity—God-likeness there is in Motherhood, and so I cannot help saying, thank you. I have so many times longed to say it, but *you* know how hard it is to speak of things buried deep down somewhere in one—and so often when one could, circumstances or people prevent you. But oh, Mother, I feel as if I could never enough thank God for not letting one go, for the love and longing for Him poured into one from the beginning, and it has been one's loadstar—don't you call it? I think, Mother, I have had hard fights sometimes, but I *know* God did not mean them to be so hard, that I made them harder many a time by yielding and by thinking it was no good—and then I weakened, and then I knew I wanted love for myself; but it is all to Him one must give it, and then He will in right time give us it, and does."

In answer to her mother, who had written her a birthday letter, Sophia poured out her love.

"Thank you, only I cannot, for the years of love and patience which you have given me; and for all and everything more than I can ever, ever thank you for—only He will thank you for me. You will know that when I fail in being all to you He meant, it is not willingly, only from blundering and ignorance; and perhaps as years go by I shall know better and do better always. My own precious, precious Mother, your very loving and satisfied child."

The final days of that poignant summer of 1873 were spent by Willie in initiation into school-life at Winchester during his first term, by my mother in an uninterrupted convalescence, and by my father, in his spare hours of leisure, in the superintendence of planting at Blackmoor. He was a great lover of trees, and year by year he enriched the park, terraces and moorland with clumps and plantations, which soon gave promise (since richly fulfilled) of remarkable beauty in the future. While the ground was being prepared for one of these

plantings in this October, a discovery occurred which roused the antiquarian tastes of my father to a pitch of enthusiasm approaching that of his friend, Sir Henry Layard. Two earthenware vases containing thirty thousand coins were dug up by the gardeners. The coins were closely packed, and caked together with dirt and verdigris. The result of a complete examination of the whole hoard showed that it contained coins of thirty Roman and Provincial Emperors and of some of their wives, ranging from Gordianus Pius, 238 A.D., to Constantius Chlorus, 292 A.D. The discovery of such a legacy from an army of occupation of fifteen hundred years before, converted us all into ardent numismatists; and, while the more perfect specimens were cleaned by an expert from the Coin Department of the British Museum, we spent all our spare moments in helping my father boil, brush and decipher the vast remainder. I do not suppose that at that time, through the length and breadth of England, any other four girls were so familiar with the order, dates, names and features of the later Roman Emperors as we were. We fell into the habit of talking of them as of close acquaintances. I remember the look of alarm on a young undergraduate's face in a ballroom, when one of my sisters quite simply described her late partner as wearing a beard like that of Philip the Arabian.

Another amusing scare occurred when we were once travelling with my father; and he, as was his wont, prepared to use the hours of the journey for cleaning a pocketful of coins. A conventional old gentleman was sitting in the opposite seat, and I shall not soon forget the expression of his countenance when my father took a parcel out of his pocket, and revealed an extremely soiled cloth and repulsive green tooth-brush. The old gentleman obviously concluded that he was travelling with a lunatic of unpleasant personal habits, who was about to finish his uncompleted toilette in the railway carriage!

But the thirty emperors from the dim past were not the only new claimants for our regard that autumn. Mary and our cousin, Lord Waldegrave, had for very many years been devoted friends ; and in October came the long foregone conclusion in their engagement. Their marriage took place in the following summer. Two years later another son-in-law was brought into our family on the occasion of my marriage in October, 1876, to George Riddings, Head Master of Winchester. His intellectual powers, freshness of mind and large sympathetic wisdom, made him a peculiarly congenial companion to Sophia. He quickly won her deep admiration and love, feelings warmly reciprocated by him, than whom no one better appreciated the rare gifts and splendid qualities with which she was endowed.

Like Mary and myself, Sophia had also, by this date, had her proposals of marriage. During her long unmarried life she received a large number of them ; but the only one to which I would refer on account of the unexpected reception which she gave it, was the earliest, which occurred when she was barely grown up. It produced the effect of an actual shock upon her mind. I could never understand why it affected her in such a curious manner. It roused in her a passionate resentment, not against its perpetrator (who was in many respects singularly attractive), but against the monstrous assumption that he, or any of her family, could for a moment entertain the idea that she could leave the home, which she loved intensely, and in which she felt herself embedded in happy security. This indignation, which was quelled with difficulty, was an instance of the surprising way in which occasionally circumstances or suggestions produced explosive violence of emotion in her mind, outbursts of shattering emotion which always had an element of baffling intensity about them.

I think that in her early youth Sophia had planned

out a gorgeously creative career for herself. She revealed her aspirations in a letter written to me in 1878.

"Kennet, Nov. 18.

"I had this craving (what a grand word, only rather too Wertherish!) born in me, and it seethed and bubbled about in me and made me pray—poor little me!—to be given the gifts of Beethoven and Raphael; and I firmly believed they were latent and would in time be born! This continued until I was eighteen! and I struggled on until I awoke to the irresistible dead bald truth three years after that, somehow or other, it wasn't to be. And after all, perhaps the struggle of *giving up* one's will was worth a good deal to a lower creature like me what struggles to *attain* are, to the higher souls; and I have come to see (ever since I have been acquainted with people in the Art world) the truth you have expressed in your letter; but I cannot understand how they can rest in the outer form of Beauty; for to me, perhaps, I never feel the hunger so much as when I am with Beauty (in any form) at its greatest; there always seems an inner and a further which one longs to reach; and it is, I suppose, the ceaseless consciousness of this 'through a glass darkly' which most draws one almost irresistibly on and gives one that feeling expressed by Hadad of old to Pharaoh. But now, please, don't think me egotistical or that I am a wretched she-disciple of Werther, or anything but a woman of six and twenty who has the happiest of lives and homes, and who often for days together hasn't a wish beyond a good lie-in-bed and her five-o'clock tea, a real walk and a delightful book, and most of all a novel. I am happier every day somehow, for there grows in one a greater power of belief and trust and strength to bear the sorrows and sins of this funny old world; and after all, when one is very wretched over it all, it is giving the lie to one's own words: 'I believe in the resurrection of the dead and the Life of the World to come.' Isn't it? I feel that this growing belief doesn't only help oneself, but others too, for I can feel the difference where a man realizes as well as knows."

Her elder sisters' marriages naturally caused a material change in Sophia's position in the family. She now became the elder daughter at home, able to pursue her friendships and plans with fewer interruptions than when we were all there, and inevitable dovetailing of our various engagements had to be undertaken with reciprocal amenities. The result of Sophia's increased freedom of action showed itself before very long in the notable band of friends, men and women rich in prestige, social position, culture, human sympathies and experiences, whom she gathered round her. I have already spoken of her genius for friendship. It appeared to have its genesis in what amounted to a gift of divination, similar to that of our South Country Dowsers, which guarded her from wasting effort in arid places, and guided her to latent sources where fruitful springs of the water of friendship welled up at the touch of the divining rod. Among the crowd of possible friends whom she met at dinner parties, country house visits and other social gatherings, she appeared to hold a magnet for those whose intimacy she desired. There was a touch of Napoleonic audacity and assurance of success with which she darted on her opportunities and achieved her conquests. My mother used sometimes to call her "the hare with many friends," but in her case the friends all loved her, and returned her love with steadfast affection beyond the end of her life. She brought a lavish contribution as her share of the friendship. Miss Margaret Bernard spoke of it thus—

"An intense interest and concern in all her fellow-creatures absorbed her mind, though it was by no means an absorption that was without criticism and discriminating observation. In her consideration and care for other people, she used up more vitality in a month than many do in a whole year. Her interest was no passing emotion, but one which led her to render any sort of help wherever it was

needed, and was always ready with a peculiarly invigorating sympathy, given without stint."

"There was never any one like her. She seemed to have room and love for so many," said another friend. And another: "She always made one feel that life was worth living, and her keenness was infectious."

The present Lord Stanmore, whom she had known from his birth, and whom the difference of nearly twenty years had not debarred from deep intimacy, said of her—

"I think the great secret of her friendships and captivation was the fact that the person she was with, was, for the time being, the most important in the world to her. She made her friends feel this. She felt and showed an intense personal interest in the affairs of her friends, and her gift of friendship always struck me as the greatest of her powers."

Another friend emphasized this point—

"Lots of people pretend to be interested in their friends' doings, but she really was; and one was sure one would never bore her by talking about oneself and one's belongings, one's difficulties and one's pleasures. She once said to me that she was never bored at any dinner party, however dull, because she could always make her neighbours talk about themselves, which was absorbingly interesting to her. It was this marvellous interest that gave her so many friends."

Mrs. Leigh Pemberton * said—

"We were first introduced to each other as babies of a few months old, so our friendship was certainly life-long. To me, Sophia's great charm was her intense love of humanity, deep sympathy, great sense of humour and power of rebounding, which one knew would always come whatever depths of unhappiness she had sunk into. Her erratic ways were often a great surprise and amusement, but that never

* Edith Hay Murray, Sophia's greatest girl-friend.

took away from the feeling of her loyalty and constancy as a real friend. You always took her up where you had left her, and she never forgot a single detail of her friend's life and interests. She was hungry to hear all you had to tell and listened entirely whole-heartedly."

Canon Holmes,* became an intimate friend of my sister after my father's death

"She always impressed me," he said, "with being a delightful combination of contradictions, none of which excluded each other. I mean this: she was one of the most dogmatic women I ever met, and at the same time more ready to give her opponent credit for being equally dogmatic, than any but a great mind could have been! She exhausted one utterly in conversation and refreshed one more than a sea-breeze! She was simply a big gust of north wind, and at the same time as soft as the kindly south-west wind. It was an extraordinary union of opposites at one and the same time. I never met any one who lived—not in departments as most of us do but—all of herself always, and did everything as though all things were of equal values—which in a sense they are! And what tremendous fun she was! simply rollicking and sparkling when the mood was on her. I don't think I ever had such genuine and spontaneous fun with any one. I think this went with her deep belief in the very highest, and made her such an advertisement for a happy religion."

There is no doubt that Sophia enjoyed extremely her intimacies with her many illustrious friends. She was keenly conscious of the stimulus and inspiration with which they enriched her mind, and she appreciated the variety of their contributions. This was a rare sense of values in one so far from the tolerant comprehensiveness of middle age, yet she seemed only to lack forbearance for self-confident pragmatists, pushers and climbers, and their vagaries irritated her quite unreasonably. Side by side with this

* Afterwards Archdeacon of London.

impatience she would befriend with infinite tenderness and consideration many of life's dreary exhausted dullards.

Still, these were the exceptions among her companions at this stage of her life. She always jealously reserved to herself certain guarded hours for the refreshing social intercourse which soon became as vitally necessary for her well-being as air, food or sleep.

Of all her girlish friendships, I think none brought greater joy to Sophia than that with the Poet Laureate and Mrs Tennyson; it arose out of the marriage of her friend, Miss Eleanor Locker, with their son, Mr Lionel Tennyson, in 1878. She agreed with Carlyle in thinking that "Great men are profitable company," as the following letters show:—

Sophia to The Hon. Mrs Riddings.

"30, Portland Place,
"April 1, 1878.

"MY DEAREST LOLLY,
"On Monday I dined with the Tennysons. Mother was very good to let me go, and I enjoyed it immensely. Only Lord Houghton, Florence Milnes, Mr Morris, 'Epic of Hades,' Lady Simeon, a nice Isle of Wight widow, Mr Grenville, Mr Clifford, and nice Mr Venables were there. In the evening they made Mr Tennyson read his 'Revenge,'* he chaunts it rather than reads. I like it more and more by hearing it read; he read it again at the Cardwells the next day, Lady Cardwell *made* him, badgered him to do so. I walked there and back alone with father and had, ah! two such talks. The Duke and Duchess of Argyll were there, Mr and Mrs Lecky and Lady Minto, and Miss and Mr Charles Parker were there. Friday we dined at Lord and Lady Thurlow's, also a very delightful dinner. Mr Lecky took me down and was so nice to me and talked delightfully. . . . Saturday night we four went from 9 to 11 to the Tennysons. N— was asked, but

* Just published.

fearing a public reception! did not go. Since he heard (he comes most Sundays to see us) that Mrs Tennyson lay in one corner on her sofa, and Mr Tennyson stood far away in another, and that he would *not* have been the centre of observation, seeing that Mr Gladstone, the Duke of Argyll, Mr Browning, Mrs Ritchie, Canon Farrar, Mr Lecky, Mr Morris, Mr Myers, M. Arnold, and many I didn't know by sight—to say nothing of Joachim—were there, he is full of regrets he did not go. Do tell me what George thinks of Canon Farrar's 'Eternal Hope,' please tell me. Joachim was glorious; Miss Ritchie accompanied.'

Sophia to The Hon. Mrs Riddings.

"Blackmoor,

"August 7, 1880.

"Edith Murray and I have had such fun. When I was in London, Mrs Tennyson wrote and asked me to come to Aldworth, and when I said I could not, as I was going to Scotland, she wrote again and asked me to sleep on the 6th, the day of Mr Tennyson's birthday. In the train coming down I saw Mr Hallam Tennyson, who asked me about our coming over. I said I had a friend, Miss Murray, coming for three days and he asked me to bring her too. Edith was enchanted, and when the letter came the next morning asking me to sleep, she said 'perhaps they will ask me too,' but I could not ask, so I left it as settled in the train with Mr Hallam, that we should go over for luncheon and afternoon. Then Edith suggested our taking tooth-brushes! so that, if asked, we could stay, as several times before they have asked us to and Mrs Tennyson has offered to lend night things. We did it this way. Willie drove us to Liss for the 10.33 train, and we got out at Haslemere a quarter of an hour late, and set off to walk the four miles to Aldworth, Edith carrying my autograph book as they wanted to see father's translation of Mr Tennyson's 'Sir John Franklin,' and with her tiny paint-box in her pouch. I with a horrid bag with sponges, tooth-brushes, combs, and a book I had to return. We should have felt less like Christian

and his burden, if the weather had not compelled us to wear ulsters. Our way was always *Excelsior*—and one thought the snow and ice would be very preferable to the heat, which was considerable despite the rain. However, at last, after several bye-adventures and three or four rests, we arrived at 12.30, and in we went and found some Americans, Mr and Mrs Field, there, and we had a pleasant enough luncheon. Afterwards Mr Tennyson retired to smoke and we all talked. Mrs Tennyson said: 'You must not walk back in the rain—we will send you—or won't you sleep?' (Edith looks unconscious surprisingly.) 'Do sleep! you never will—now do this time. I can supply everything.' Finally we accepted, and Edith's acting was wonderful. At last conscience obliged me to tell Mrs Tennyson we had tooth-brushes on spec!

"At 6.30 we dined and then followed a very delightful evening; they were all charmed with Edith, and Mr Field asked Mr Tennyson if he was sure she was English and not American? The next morning she was up at five and sketched and wrote, and explained at breakfast that she got up early because she had to pack!! The views are glorious, glorious! We were here again at 12, and father and mother from London at 8. A rough night as gusty as the winter—to-day, Sunday, is lovely. Willie and I go to Scotland tomorrow. Father says Parliament is to sit until middle of September, they find it absolutely necessary. He sat for half an hour with Mr Gladstone yesterday; he looked pretty well and is in good spirits. Good-bye, darling, love to George."

From the Parnassus heights of Aldworth to the dust-heaps of Vauxhall seems a grim descent, yet Sophia gladly made it for the sake of another friend.

The Hon. Katharine Scott, sister of Lord Polwarth, was one of my special friends. About the time of my marriage she fell into a condition of ill-health, which gradually became one of permanent invalidism. Sophia visited her constantly, and a very deep love grew up between them. Miss Scott adopted her as a spiritual "grandchild," and found sparkling

refreshment in the congenial intimacy with my sister, whom she enshrined in a mental picture in her heart—

“Such a nice picture,” she told her, “in your brown gown and hat and those yellow cowslips in your hand. My dear Enquire-Within-for-Everything! (that’s your name) I keep hoarding up things to ask you when I see you—difficulties to be solved, texts to be interpreted, one or two people’s sadnesses to be comforted—and myself to be delighted by you!”

On her side, Sophia was fully conscious of the help this elder girl-friend was to her. She described it thus—

“Being with Kitty strengthened every better impulse; softened, increased reverence and unselfishness; made for patience, and most of all for love.” When Miss Scott died in 1899, Sophia wrote to her cousin Miss Florence Wyndham—

“I can only think about Kitty. I can’t realize it; though she has been so long ill, it has come to be as a great surprise. ‘No more pain’ is the one refrain of infinite comfort. Also when one hears of the sudden death of a saint, it fills one with awe for the honour done her and the initiation which already must be hers. Of course for oneself, for her people, for Ventnor, it is an immense loss. It is wonderful what she did with that frail body and constant suffering. She is one of those who have co-operated with our Lord and done her part in the Incarnation. Everything she had and was helped and blessed all round her.”

In 1878, the date of which I am now writing, when this dear friend was moved by God to bring help to the cinder-sifters of Vauxhall, and to provide a Parochial Mission Woman to live among the dust-yard workers, it was with eager joy that Sophia accepted her invitation to attend the weekly Mothers’ Meetings held for these women. She became a

frequent visitor there, and had many deep and helpful talks with them. She used to pray with them, often in her mothering intimate way holding the hand of some rough girl while she prayed. She won the love of all the women. On one occasion when Louisa, Lady Ashburton, kindly invited them to spend the day at her country home at Addiscombe, Sophia wrote an account of the visit in an article printed in *Macmillan's Magazine* of January, 1880. By the publisher's kind permission I am allowed to reproduce it here. It is interesting, as showing my sister's gift of picturesque writing, and as being one of her earliest publications.

"DUSTYARDS." *

"Have you ever travelled by the South-Western Railway from Waterloo Station? and, if you have, did you notice close below you on your left, after leaving Vauxhall, two large dustyards lying on the south side of the Thames? Very dreary they are, and the workers within fill one with pity for them in their filthy drudgery, seeming trodden down and hardly human. It is something like passing over a grave when one whirls by those dustyards. One feels as if all light, purity, and brightness were shut off from them, and from those who toil there. Some such thoughts had often filled the heart of a traveller by that line with a pity that was not content to merely pity, but which could not resist until it had, through many difficulties and drawbacks, brought at least the dawn of light to those dark lives, and, as it were, brought them into relationship with worlds brighter and more blessed than their own.

"Before I speak of the work which has been attempted, I must give you the bearings of the workshop.

"The dust-carts from the parishes of St James and St Martin, Charing Cross, bring their loads to one yard; and from St John and St Margaret, Knightsbridge, to the other. There the refuse is

* From *Macmillan's Magazine*, vol. xli., January, 1880.

thrown up by men to the women above, kneeling on the cinder mounds ; who, with leathern pads above their leathern aprons (against which they strike their sieves), divide the sifted refuse between three baskets —in one they place the broken glass and crockery and rough bits of all kinds of material, which goes by the name of 'Hard Cove,' and which is emptied by boys upon a large heap at one end of the yard, eventually to be carried away in barges for road and foundation making ; into the second basket the vegetable matter is thrown for manure ; and into the third, the large cinders, which are the sifters' perquisite, who generally sell them in the neighbourhood. The fine sifted dust from the cinders is called 'Breeze,' and is very valuable for green-houses and gardens, and also for making bricks. In each yard a forewoman is placed by the contractors to see that the women sift steadily from seven until five, resting for their dinner-hour from twelve to one. They work all weathers, but during the winter, or in rain, under sheds provided for them. Their pay is a shilling a day. They form a confraternity among themselves, and are very rough in their ways. One day a lady saw a man, who had been carrying away some rubbish in the yard, rush at a woman (for some provocation), seize her by the throat, and almost strangle her. I mention this as a very characteristic incident of dustyard life.

"In December, 1878, a scheme was set on foot for the purpose of reaching these cinder-sifters by means of a mission woman from the Parochial Mission Woman's Association, working under a Lady Superintendent ; and admirably has it been carried out. By visiting them in their homes, and talking with them at their work, Mrs Patent,* the mission woman, has gradually won her way through some serious opposition, besides a great deal of rough chaff in the yards. And she has even persuaded several of the women to deposit money with her for clothing. At first only three or four responded to her invitations to the Monday tea-gatherings in the mission-room, and they were violently attacked by their fellows for doing so ; cups and saucers flew about, and the disturbance,

* The real names of persons mentioned in this article are not given.

with the kind assistance of some street-boys, became so serious that the Lady Superintendent was obliged, very unwillingly, to accept the attendance of a policeman, until gradually the riots ceased and he was no longer needed for his Monday duty.

"One of the women who had most persistently rebuffed all Mrs Patent's invitations was so conquered by her nursing in a long illness, that she now comes every Monday to the meeting from the Wandsworth dustyards, to which she has moved. The meeting begins at four with reading aloud a story-book ; after which they have tea, and this is laid out very carefully and neatly, to teach them the beauty of order. Tea over, a short address is given, lasting about ten minutes, a few hymns are sung, and the meeting is closed ; but the room is open until eight or nine o'clock, and any who care to go there are welcomed by the Lady Superintendent, as well as by the mission woman. Many of the guests belong to the most degraded class of women ; sometimes they reel in quite drunk, and seek a refuge with Mrs Patent, whose unfailing kindness and patience has not been unrewarded. Slowly but surely they are beginning to appreciate its value, and also that of the mission-room, as a place where they may warm their food and find a shelter. There is a wise saying that a man must winter and summer his friend if he would know him ; and so, having introduced you to the ladies of the Vauxhall Dustyard at their work, shall I tell you about our day in the country with them this July ?

"A Lady Manager of the Parochial Mission Woman's Association planned it, hoping to win some of the wildest who had hitherto kept aloof from the Mothers' Meetings. Twenty-five dustyarders came, and twenty-four other members of the meeting, all out-door workers, but a grade higher than my special friends, who indignantly repudiate the title of cindersifters, but speak of themselves and of one another as 'a lady from the dustyard.' They were certainly the lowest and most depraved women I had ever been with ; there was something in their voices, laughter, manners and words very loud and coarse, and their costumes were most original. Only two or three wore whole gowns ; the greater number

appeared in skirts of varying degrees of dirt and gaudiness, and bodies which, being pinned together, supplied each other's deficiencies. Thus the undermost body (generally a cotton that had once been white) might fasten comfortably at the waist, but refuse to do so farther up; there body No. 2, perhaps a dingy red, stepped in, and it again failing at the neck, the top body, No. 3, something of the woollen description, settled the difficulty. But the *pièce de resistance* in each costume was the bonnet. Some were worn perpendicularly by the help of huge combs in the back hair! and others descended like landslips on to the neck, showing off the fringe and head-top arrangements to admirable advantage. Since, I have learnt that they were hired for the day; and indeed they and their wearers did not seem quite at home with each other, and the instant we arrived at our destination they slipped off their bonnets, and only put them on again to go away.

"We had all met at Cannon Street, and the women were as wild and excited as children; many had never left London and two or three had never left their dustyard and court.

"Those who were travellers assumed an air of great importance, and were treated quite deferentially by the others; but only a few had been so fortunate, and they owed their experience to hopping. On our arrival at Addiscombe, 'flys' were secured for the women with babies and for two who were lame, as we had a mile to walk. This division at first caused some difficulty; everybody wished to 'ride,' and a baby did not seem to be considered a fair qualification! At last we started, the two 'flys' well laden (five women and babies inside and two or three on the box!) and the walkers following. The procession moved on, but one *lady* remained rooted to the earth, with a face black as thunder, growling and muttering in a most unpromising way.

"'What is the matter?' asked our Mistress of the Ceremonies.

"'O! never you mind; it's only one of Mrs O'Mally's tantrums,' was the consoling answer.

"'Yes,' said another lady, 'just like her! I knew she'd misbehave herself.'

"What was to be done? The dustyard ladies evidently considered it a *cause perdue* and calmly walked on, leaving Mrs O'Mally standing like a naughty child in a corner with her finger literally, not figuratively, in her mouth! I could not leave her, and turning back I went up to her and said—

"Will you not come on? We shall be left quite behind."

"Grunt.

"I am afraid we shall lose our way, for I am a stranger in these parts; were you ever here before?"

"Grunt (No. 2). 'No!'

"Then don't you think we had better go on? Is anything the matter?"

"Grunt (No. 3). 'Thought I was asked to a party of pleasure; didn't know I was coming to a funeral!'

"I am sorry, but I do not quite understand you," I answered, feeling rather bewildered.

"There go the carriages, and we're to follow, two and two!"

"Oho! thought I, the walking is the grievance then.

"Well, you see," I answered, "there are only two "flys" to be had, and you and I have no babies."

"Bain't married be you?"

"No, I am not," I answered, laughing.

"Thought not—too young!"

"Not at all too young, but still I am not; and now won't you come on with me?"

"No! don't see why them with babies should ride. *I'd* have brought one if *I'd* known."

"Well, I think you and I shall have the best of it when we get to "Lady Mackenzie."* I don't think carrying about a baby all day is worth the drive there. Have you any friends here, for I am a stranger, and the only lady I know has gone on in front, so will you keep company with me? I feel quite lonesome, and I have never been here before."

"Grunt (a gracious grunt this time). 'Don't mind if I do.'

"And at last off we started; all the ladies, excepting two and Mrs Patent, being far ahead. We talked about the weather and the crops and the trees, and at

* Louisa, Lady Ashburton, their hostess.

last Mrs O'Mally turned upon me with a most benignant grin, and said—

“‘Well! I was in one of my tantrums, and you've coaxed me out. I *never* knows how I gets into them or how I gets out of them; and that's the worst, to get out of them.’

“‘Yes,’ I answered, ‘it is very hard, I am sure.’

“‘Well, now, and what do you do, my dear, in your tantrums?’

“It was with difficulty that I controlled my mouth, for she evidently thought that my sympathy was the fruit of exactly similar experience; however, I answered as gravely as possible.

“‘It is no good trying to get out by oneself, I think. I always ask God to give me His Holy Spirit to help me, and He does.’

“‘Well, now, do you, my dear? I'll try,’ with another and broader grin.

“We were nearing ‘Lady Mackenzie's’ house, and the first and only drops of rain that day began to fall, and I, trembling for the glory of my friend's bonnet, offered her my umbrella, saying, ‘I am afraid the rain will spoil your bonnet.’

“She looked concerned, but refused it because she thought that mine would suffer.

“‘Thank you, but mine does not matter; it is not new.’

“‘Shouldn't think so!’ and she took my umbrella and kept it with entire peace of mind. But oh! if I could only convey to you some idea of the tone of utter, lofty, appraising contempt; and the look was even more searching and condemning than the tone. Indeed, it was natural, for there could be no comparison between a bonnet of voyant blue satin, wreathed in roses, bespangled with pearls, overshadowed by an ostrich feather, and finally given ‘quite a look’ by a bunch of tiny brass keys over one eye and a mother o' pearl shell over the other, and my poor black straw with actually no feathers and not even a flower! But I blessed those drops of rain, for they proved true to their proverbial virtue, and Mrs O'Mally's love under my green umbrella developed rapidly, and soon we were walking arm-in-arm; which privilege I thoroughly appreciated when

Mrs O'Mally stretched out the hand which was through my arm, saying, 'Black, ain't it?' I could not deny it; her hand was very black.

"I never cleans it, *never*; wouldn't be any use if I tried ever so, so I never does.' Truly, a comfortable dispensation from all ablutionary duties!

"And now two other ladies had joined us, and one having said something about 'a real lady' (I did not overhear more than these words, but my friend, like all the party, was very quick in overhearing everything that was said), Mrs O'Mally broke in with, 'And so you *have* a real lady with you, I'll be bound! What's your name, my dear?'

"I answered, feeling instinctively that the *Miss* would fall very flat! They had all been talking about '*Lady Mackenzie*,' and looked upon us as another order of beings to themselves.

"'Well,' said Mrs O'Mally, in a tone of kindly consideration, but many degrees lower than before, 'and a kind of a lady, I dare say, for all that.'

"'Yes,' quickly added another woman, 'it ain't only titles and riches as makes the lady, it's manners too. I'll be bound you're a kind of lady.'

"'Thank you, I hope I *am*; and is not it nice that you and I can be ladies, even if we have not titles, if we are gentle and kind to others, and keep ourselves respectable?'

"'That's it, that's it, depend upon it, my dear,' they all murmured in chorus; and so with our courtesy rank we entered the gates, as smiling and contented as a king is supposed to be! but imagine my feelings when my group of ladies informed me that they were 'very dry,' and wanted to 'liquor up!' 'and,' quoth Mrs O'Mally, 'has her ladyship any public near?'

"I told them I was very sorry, that there was none, and that we must wait a little while until dinner was ready. I did not tell them that dinner would only bring lemonade!

"We sauntered about, admired 'her ladyship's extensive domains and spacious mansion,' and gazed at the distant view of the Crystal Palace. Some swung, and others were glad just to sit about doing nothing but enjoy. At last we were called to dinner. Such a dinner! Beef, mutton, ham, young potatoes

and green peas, salad, cucumber, and the newest of new bread, followed by gigantic plum puddings. In such company even lemonade passed muster, and the appetites of the guests were worthy of the hospitality shown. After dinner we all dispersed to meet for tea at six o'clock, at the call of the big bell. It touched one to see their joy in the wild flowers, and their pride in their respective bouquets; and as I saw the weary hardness in the elder faces soften away in the new happiness and beauty around, I thought it might be a faint indication of the change that will be in the world to come. And the younger women were certainly gentler and more womanly at the close, than at the beginning, of the day. I cannot tell you half of the many little sayings and doings that struck me greatly in their utter *newness*, and which made me sometimes very, very sad, and sometimes intensely amused. Their quickness of observation, ready wit, power of repartee, and utter freedom of speech were wonderful; but then many were Irishwomen, with such a brogue! My countrywomen's English was very broad also, and the whole party had many idioms and words which were unintelligible to me. They all had nicknames, and I was introduced to 'the Countess of Whitcomb Hall,' 'My Lady Crawley,' 'Johnnie,' and so on, with all gravity and pomp. To my delight they volunteered an explanation of 'the Countess.'

"' You see, my dear, she was always a-reading yellar novalls, and one she was partiklar took up with was "The Countess of Whitcomb Hall," and so we just called her the Countess. You've read it, I'll be bound?' and my answer in the negative was received with a recommendation to read it 'as soon as ever you gets the chance.' They talked to me about their work, which is very degrading; but liberty is sweet, and the dustyard is to them so natural that there is no sense of degradation, only a kind of defiant holding aloof from other castes, under an idea that they are looked down upon. Of *moral* degradation they appear entirely unconscious. Browning's answer to Lear's problems—

"' Is there a reason in nature for these hard hearts? O Lear,
That a reason out of nature must turn them soft, seems clear'—

was illustrated by a talk I had with these dustyard women.

"We were standing about in groups outside the tent after tea, and they were expressing themselves in very warm and energetic words as to their enjoyment of the day, and gratitude for the kindness which had given it to them.

"One asked, 'Whoever gave it to us? she? or she?' pointing to the Lady Superintendent and another lady.

"I explained that the Lady Manager was the friend who had brought them down, and who had won for them the kindness of their hostess.

"'But whoever would have thought it, my dear? Niver heard of such a thing in my born days as them great ladies a-thinking of us! I goes to the tea mating sometimes, and sich a thing was niver before; in *all* my born days, niver know'd nobody come nigh the dustyards—did you? or you? or you?' turning round and addressing one *lady* after another.

"They all answered emphatically 'Niver,' and one added with great candour, 'and I warn't *overplaised* whin they fust comed, neither; didn't want 'em! Thought as there war somethink at the bottom, my dear! that I did; for *I* never saw a lady in our yards nor a soul to speak to, in all my born days—there!'

"'Shall I tell you what brought these friends? It was all through another friend whom you do not know, and have not even seen to speak to.'

"'Well, I niver!' was the general exclamation, as they gathered closer round to hear.

"I told them how a lady had often passed the yard in the train going into the country, and that she had thought they looked very hard-worked, and had wondered if they had any friends who cared for them; and she had thought of this again and again, until she had come to love them herself; but she could not go to them, so, though far away from Vauxhall, she had not rested until she had, with the help of others, sent Mrs Patent to befriend them, and in one way or another gained all their other friends too.

"'And what's her name, my dear? And is she in health?'

“‘No, she is not very strong.’

“‘Poor dear! poor dear! But whatever made her care for the likes of us? I niver did nothink for her; what made her so took up with us?’

“It was the general opinion that here was an extraordinary fact—that a lady should care, ‘worrif ‘erself,’ and ‘all for folks as ‘ad done nothink for ‘er.’

“‘I think I know,’ I answered. ‘She loves some one—the Lord Jesus, Who loved her so much that He even died for her when she had done nothing for Him;’ and I went on to tell of the strange power of this Love to satisfy and gladden the hearts of men and women, and to fill them in their turn with abundant love for their fellow-men. This it was which had led a stranger to care for the workers in the dustyards, and to try to lighten their lives; to share with them this wonderful Love.

“I could hardly go on; one hard face after another softened and puckered up, while the tears welled up in their eyes.

“‘Praise the Almighty for sich a dear critter! and give ‘er my love, my dear; and plaise the Almighty restore ‘er to ‘ealth!’ said Mrs O’Mally; and each and all begged me to give their love and thanks.

“By this time a magnificent brake, warranted to carry twelve persons inside and three on the box, in the language of cab notices, had arrived; and our Lady Manager, who had secured it almost as magically as the famous coach and four of pumpkin renown, sent us off in two detachments, so as to give all the joy of a ride. Mrs Patent started first with her party, and the rest of us, ‘walking gently,’ were in due time picked up by the emptied brake—that is, with the exception of the three ‘real’ ladies, myself, and a very nice woman who gave up her ride most graciously when she found that with all possible squashing and squeezing some one must still be left out. She told me that it was a mercy no beer had been given, or some would certainly have been overcome by their terrible enemy, and the day would have been spoilt by quarrels and fighting. We were speaking of this as we neared the station, and found some of the second waggonette party missing!

We were informed by the others that they had just gone into the public at the corner!

“Our brave Lady Manager immediately walked into the public-house and brought the women out, leaving their potions on the bar, to the intense astonishment of some men who were also refreshing themselves. Poor women! they were at first *furious* at being ‘traited and controuled like children,’ said they would never speak to the ladies again, nor go near the meeting. Gradually the Lady Superintendent and Mrs Patent, with exquisite tact, restored them to calmness, and brought them to say—that if the lady had expressed any wish, they’d not have offended her—not they; but why they shouldn’t take a drop when they was dry, *they* couldn’t for the life of them understand.

“It had never occurred to any one that such a prohibition was necessary; but the right thing, no doubt, would have been to have simply said—

“Will you please all keep together at the station, and then we shall not lose one another?’ for clearly they could see no more harm in going into the public-house than we should in drinking a cup of tea when calling at a friend’s house; and although they had probably had a better dinner and tea than ever in their lives before, yet not having had any beer, they felt quite justified in putting a finishing touch to the joys of the day by going for a glass, instead of wasting the time waiting for us, before the train was due. We were all happy again by the time the train came up, and amid reiterated invitations to visit them at their work, we said good-bye—for they, Mrs Patent, and their Lady Superintendent were to change at Waterloo for Vauxhall, and we whirled away to Charing Cross.

“This little sketch is but the experience of a short time, and that short time has taught us that dark and unpromising as the work-field seemed, there was much beneath the surface that was good and hopeful, and needing only a little sympathy and love to awaken in many a seemingly dull face and rugged heart memories of better things long forgotten, or new-born hopes of a higher life. Surely these first-fruits should encourage us to go on, and to look in

this, as in wider fields, for a fuller harvest in God's good time." *

" SOPHIA M. PALMER."

November, 1879.

A second London district, where another of the Parochial Mission Women was at that time carrying on a special work, was at Notting Hill. A band of women workers supported a coffee-house and mission work under the name of The Lily, for the benefit of the laundresses of that district. They were a very rough set of girls. My mother was Lady Manager there, and she and Sophia used often to visit The Lily. Sophia wrote a second article in *Macmillan's Magazine* of August, 1881, appealing for support for this work. "Soapsuds" (as the article is called) is full of racy and pathetic touches, and brims over with sympathy of head and heart.

One curious prejudice Sophia always retained in spite of her knowledge of the temptation to drink to which the exhausting nature of their work exposed many of her dust-heap and laundry friends. She positively disliked all Temperance propaganda. Her description of her annoyance when the matter was brought up at a Girls' Friendly Society Meeting in 1878, shows the attitude always maintained by her with regard to Temperance Societies to the end.

"The G.F.S. Meeting at Winchester was rather amusing," she wrote. "And some business was done, though women in numbers aggravate me; they don't do business simply as business, but will gush in between and introduce irrelevant remarks. Some of their propositions were absurd. For instance, one lady proposed a special officer to look after the temperance of members so that all might join a branch of C.E.T.S., and, as many as may be, become Total Abstainers; quoting the text, 'If meat make my brother to offend,' etc., and saying that if all

* Miss Scott continued to support this work till her death in 1899.

became total abstainers the stigma of being one (*i.e.* because of being tempted to be a drunkard) would be removed. I rejoice to say that Miss Yonge * protested, and I added my opinion and protest, and we carried the day. Really it was too foolish. You might as well say that all sane people should wear straight jackets, or honest folk have their heads shaved, to prevent thieves leaving prison from being marked!"

In the winter of 1878 the vicar of Blackmoor, the Rev. W. W. Howard, asked Sophia to try and get hold of some Philistines among the village men, who resented help from other quarters, but whom he believed would accept it from her.

Although she shrank from making the experiment, Sophia believed that it was her duty to attempt it. She poured out her anxieties in a letter to her mother on December 10—

"I do wish I was like Edith, and always was working, and never felt lazy; people who have not indolent natures don't know what they have escaped. I am dreading this class so. First, because I hate turning out at a quarter to six, and, you see, six to half-past is the only time the farm men can be free, and which does not interfere with church. Then I hate beginning anything new. It's horrid! These young men, and perhaps older men, are rather trying to address! for the only chance of its doing is my reading to them and explaining, as many cannot read at all. But still I will try. I am sure I ought to, as there is no one else, and it is dreadful that so many young men should be utterly ignorant of the life of our Lord. Mrs de Jersey † told us last year that an old man at Empshott, dying, was asked if he knew how our Lord died, and he said: 'He was drowned.' Of course if they grasp the fact of His living and dying for us, that is the essential; but still it struck one as very sad that in parishes such as that and ours such ignorance should exist, and when Mrs de Jersey

* The author of "The Heir of Redclyffe," etc.

† The wife of the vicar of the adjoining parish.

went on to say that she found it was very common, I began to think of taking our Lord's life as a whole for the mothers' meetings, our maids' class, and these young men, and so doing a little to make them know anyhow the outlines of the Wonderful Life."

When the class had been a year in existence. Sophia wrote on the Mondays of November 10, 17, and 24—

"Yesterday all went well. Thirty-two men came to me, and among them two tramps!" And : "Yesterday, 17th—the black she-sheep actually came to my She-Class ! Joy ! In the evening I had thirty-two men again. Six old ones were not there, but six new ones were."

On November 24—

"Freda had a very bad walk to Oakhanger to her class there, but abundant reward. Altogether the care of the people seemed very real, for worse roads or more interrupting weather I never saw. Excepting from twelve to one when the sun shone in a glorious way over the snow, reminding one of the words about the Transfiguration—heavy snow mists hung about all day. There were nine of us at the early Holy Communion, and a very good congregation both at eleven and at three, and both my girls' bible class and the men's reading at six-fifteen were fully attended. As to the men, more came than ever before. I found over forty sitting waiting. I had thought perhaps there would be no one, or that perhaps God would send me one or two, for we have never had such weather in my memory. And some of them had come over two miles ! We had a delightful evening."

There was no doubt that the experiment was a success. Sophia continued to hold her Sunday Men's Reading for many years under successive vicars, who wisely left her free to employ whatever methods she chose in conducting it. She always held it on Sunday evenings in a dusky parish room with no lights, save that from the glow of the fire in winter

and from the evening sky in summer. She found the men's souls threw off their shyness much more readily if she talked and prayed with them in the twilight.

Her friend, Edith Murray, who was present one evening, was strongly impressed by the power of Sophia's teaching. She prayed, then took a few verses and used them in a luminously personal manner, putting a deeper feeling of religion into the actual lives of her hearers. The explanation was wonderfully clear, given with intense earnestness. "She seemed to be in a mood of ardent going out and giving out to them, of radiating the love of God, of flinging it into their souls." There was no doubt about the real interest and sympathy with which the men listened to her. There was no stiffness in their attitude to her. They seemed simply at ease there. They came with great deliberation, and clearly enjoyed the three-quarters of an hour with her and the straight Gospel teaching. One evening Waldegrave and Mary passed a man known as "Roady Smith" stumping hurriedly along the road; and when they asked him where he was going, he answered: "I be going to hear Lady Sophia! She du beat Mr Howard and she du beat Mr Jelf!" "Call so and so clever!" said another of the labourers, Charles Nellbick, to Sophia. "Not as clever as you be! I be bound. Why, there isn't a parson in England fit to hold a candle to you in preaching, that there isn't!" he insisted—both rare outbursts of appreciation from the ordinarily taciturn Hampshire labourer.

These instances are only three of the many petals on Sophia's blossom of service. My mother was not a little anxious lest she should overcrowd her life, but the same wisdom which, in the days of my sister's childhood, had made my mother insist on submission to her maturer judgment, now, in the days of her womanhood, recognized her right to determine her life for herself, whether in service, or friendships, or

other lines of interest. She wrote to Sophia on December 11, 1878—

“I do not quite understand whether the men's class is to be in addition to your boys' and your maids' classes, or an enlarged boys' class. You can tell me when we meet, only please don't overdo yourself. I think your idea of taking our Blessed Lord's life for your mothers, maids and men is *very* good indeed. God bless you, dear Child.”

Sophia assured her mother that she might thoroughly trust her!—

“I am bound by the IV. and V. Commandments, and I *really* will be sensible and conscientious, and I want to last as long as may be! And I am much happier really working, so much happier! You may really trust me. I feel that the least I can do to thank you and father for allowing me to give is to use my liberty most faithfully.”

Sophia had already learnt the great truth: “that reward for service is more service, and still more service, and reward for trust is more trust and still more trust.”

CHAPTER III

1878—1881

(AGE : TWENTY-SIX TO TWENTY-NINE)

My mother used to describe Sophia's pen as that of a very "ready writer." In every sitting-room of our home the blotting-books abounded with evidence of the fact in the numerous fragmentary letters scattered by her which bore witness to the good intentions of a forgetful and copious correspondent. She undoubtedly possessed the power of vivid presentation of whatever appealed to her sense of things divine, beautiful, pathetic, humorous, or censorious.

When in the early summer of 1878 Sophia accompanied Mary Waldegrave to Ems, she managed to extract plenty of enjoyment out of what to most people proves to be an arid experience. Her lively letters gave us amusing sketches of the trivial life at the German Bath.

"A guest-list comes twice a week," she wrote. "And I feel a sympathy I never experienced before with the interest such old and single ladies as those in Cranford take in the names and histories of their neighbours. The dressing of a certain set of Germans is beyond describing ! Very high hats riding uneasily on very highly decorated heads, and this under a scorching sun ! Very low-cut dresses, white or black mittens, with short open-sleeved gowns ! They are *so* ugly, men and women ! Whenever any special political crisis occurs, pray father to write to me. I miss him dreadfully for that, to say nothing of anything else ! as old Miss Dewar would express it :

‘ Instinctively I inwardly begin to ask him something and behold ! only the air to answer me.’”

Sophia to The Lady Selborne.

“ June 27, 1878.
“ Bad Ems.

“ Yesterday we had a very hot and rather amusing expedition to Nassau. The view there from the Schloss, is very extensive and has certainly a peculiar beauty and richness of its own, but to an English woman, and especially one who has had the blessedness of knowing Scotland and seeing the Cumberland and Westmoreland country, it is only, can only be, very pleasant and pretty. This is what we saw. Range beyond range of low undulating thickly wooded hills, separated by broad richly cultivated valleys, with Nassau at our feet on the South, and on the other side a very picturesque village of wooden-beamed cottages with a stream hurrying through it to join the Lahn. I like the quaint right-angled fashion in which many of the villages are built, so that, seen from above, they look like a Chinese puzzle. An outer courtyard and three broken towers with a keep are all that remain of Nassau Schloss. We went into the modern house of the Stein family, where Baron Stein lived. That stands in the town. We found some one to show us over the tower where visitors are admitted. We were first invited to enter by an old soldier porter, whose coat, covered with medals, would have filled Willie with veneration. In the tower were two rooms shown ; in the first were a bust of Stein, his own odds and ends, furniture, etc., and empanelled portraits of the Crown Prince, Bismarck, Von Moltke, Kaiser Max, Charles V., Luther, the three Waterloo Generals, Frederick the Great, Maria Theresa and her husband, and another Saxonian trio. They were all more or less good portraits, and had a force about them which impressed one with being the people. But both Charles V. and Frederick the Great were utterly different to what I had pictured them to myself. Charles, a long-nosed, long, broad-faced man in rather the decline of life, with grey lank hair, a heavy

jowl and sullen rather protruding eyes, his mouth was strong with something of animal, rather than mental, strength. Only his forehead was in keeping with the idea I had formed of the Emperor. And Frederick (whom I had imagined wiry and sinewy with a sharp feverish face) possesses instead, in the picture, a rather comely face as to features and colouring, only, I am glad to say, there is quite enough evil and narrowness and certainly wit too, in his narrow eyes, sharp thin lips and generally disagreeable expression—for I can't bear him! Mary and I agreed that Kaiser Max was just what we could think the man in 'The Dove in the Eagle's Nest' to have grown into: a face that might have developed into such beauty and greatness if he had willed it so. In the second room were memorial tablets commemorating Napoleon I.'s career, and by these are the busts of Alexander, Francis and Frederick William. Four other tablets record the humiliations received by Germany from France; and, vis-a-vis, their revenge: the battle list of 1870 and 1871. It is stirring to see and also very sad. The bitter feeling seems imperishable. Curiously enough, people say that the Socialist party have injured themselves much by their ill-timed blow, as, had this assault on the Emperor* not happened before the general election, July 30, the Socialist returns would have been considerable. Now people have been alarmed, and all, Liberals and Radicals, are against the Socialist candidates. A German lady said: 'It's religion! that is all wrong! Hanover has quite changed since its annexation.'

Sophia to The Lord Selborne.

"July 5, 1878.

"It's really very nice of me to write to you, when I know you will never write to me! but I must tell you about our day yesterday. You would so have enjoyed the beauty of Limburg Cathedral and the great picturesqueness of the town. You know it is the see of the poor trampled-upon-by-that-horrid-Bismarck Bishop (that is a new adjective!). He is

* Karl Nobiling's attempt to assassinate the German Emperor.

exiled now and has no home. We entered the town from the more level modern side by the railway station and climbed up into the old town with its high gabled houses, oriel windows, here a queer turret, there an odd projecting room which almost touched its vis-a-vis in the narrow street; all built in Chester fashion with wooden beams and many with rich carving below the beams, above the doors and up the house sides. Looking down one of the endless alleys, you might see another quaint street at right angles or a far-away view over the beautiful river, rich meadows and woods, of the blue distant hills. There was such a variety of colour in odds and ends of curtains, a scarlet window-seat, flowering shrubs and quaint costumes, men in blue and pink jerkins and women in bright petticoats with handkerchiefs tied over their heads. But the great beauty was the Cathedral. You climb several flights of stone steps and, by design or, more likely, by happy accident, the landings of the several flights bring one opposite a high wall or building blocking out the view. Then, when you reach the last step, the Cathedral rises suddenly before you in wonderful beauty. It is built on a magnificent site, high up on a massive wall of rock which springs out from the river side, without any brethren, all alone. The whole town is built either on the ascending ground to this rock or around its base. The view from the river side shows the apse with its curious and beautiful colonnade, which Mr Hampton says is very common in Spanish and Southern French churches. The view of the Western Front with its seven towers and gateway rather puzzled me, being Norman in structure but Gothic in decoration. The same mixture is seen within. Baedeker says it is Transition, which explains it. The great pleasure is certainly in the originality and richness with still something of the Norman strength, more like photographs I have seen of some of the Normandy churches. It is utterly new to me. I can't find anything beyond the most meagre facts as to the architecture in the guide-books, and I did want you so to tell us. On the Portal is inscribed, '*Basilica St Georgii Martyris erecta 909*', but most of it only dates back to 1235. The font is

earlier—very massive, of sandstone and supported by hideous goblins. I wonder if they represent the demons exorcized at baptism? Love to all and specially my dear Mother. Oh! we did want her, she would so have revelled in it all. It was exactly one of her and my days!"

To her mother she wrote at the end of the course—

"Yours are such enjoyable letters. You don't know how we gloat over them. They serve as our treat—and thank you for Father's too. It is a splendid letter and just what I longed for, only he must have thought he was writing to the Duke of Argyll or Mr Gladstone! for he signed himself—(will you believe it?) 'Your affte Selborne.' Luckily I had my letter-case in my pocket and I took out a letter of his and put that ending in place of the other horrid stoical signature. Never before has he so signed himself—always—(I am copying): 'God bless you ever my dear child, Your loving father Selborne,' and sometimes: 'Very loving' and once: 'most loving.' I *hate* 'affectly,' but I won't attribute coldness or absentness to him! and when I return I shall scratch it out and he shall rewrite his signature; but thank him very very much. It was so good of him to write *such* a letter and when he is so busy too. I am looking forward to you and Blackmoor, oh! so much; only still I am very sorry to leave here and this life. I have enjoyed this she-honeymoon so much! I can't tell you how much and above all on Sundays. I shall never forget them. Yesterday after church we went up to Lady Laura Hampton. I stayed until 4.30. Her little girl Constance wished me to share her spiritual instruction: 'It would be so much more fun. It's so dull answering alone!' So I did. Miss Constance is a very argumentative and logical little person, and she went into the whole question of temptation so eagerly and deeply. Fancy a little creature of nine saying: 'Well! if there's to be no end to temptation in this world, the sooner we are out of it the better!' We then repeated the Catechism, and I am grieved to say I made two mistakes in my Duty to my Neighbour! So, to Constance's supreme

delight, I had to say it again! I explained for your credit, how particular you were! Love to Father, my Fre, Meme and you. Oh Mother! I *am* thankful. Bless you! How good you are and what good you do: a sort of 'Mother in Israel.' And Freda is worthy of you, two unselfish holy souls.

"Your child,
"S. M. P."

The intense interest in politics felt by Sophia from the days of early girlhood flashed and burnt through half her letters. Here is one written by her to her mother on May 17, 1879, giving her impressions after being present at a debate in the House of Lords on the Conservative Government's conduct of our Eastern policy.

"I am glad to have lived to see Lord Beaconsfield roused into a fury! but oh! the servility, the contemptible weakness of the *Times*! I am longing to hear father's opinion of the debate. It seemed to me that the Duke's* was about as steady, well-concentrated a fire as could be, and that the enemy could not defend themselves, only were reduced to helpless wrath, desperate efforts at thrusts, which were not answers but irrelevant stray shots, if so be they might slay by accident, always falling back upon their one last resort, a piteous indignant appeal to *their* country against the malice of *their* and *their* country's enemies. How thankful they must be for the obligatory silence which so conveniently seals their mouths, but their audaciousness is astonishing when one considers that 'murder will out'; and that one day their secrets will be public. I suppose it is the same reason which induces speculators to dare Society, although they know in their inner inside that sooner or later the public smash must come. It's a very curious thing that a man should be fitted up with so many layers or selves round the real inside self (not all men, thank goodness). Some appear to have been lavishly provided with these extra selves; and Lord Beaconsfield must be very rich in these psychological

* The Duke of Argyll.

treasures. . . . Really I think diplomacy must be the devil's invention!"

From Godinton (then rented by Mr Murray) Sophia wrote to her mother—

"Mr* and Mrs Austin dined here and I told him plainly when he began to talk to me about politics that I did not intend to exchange any words whatever on that subject. He was very full of an interview with Lord Beaconsfield, who sent for him and told him he had watched his course for years with the keenest interest, that he *must* have a seat in Parliament and should: and that his verses in the *World* the other day were the best and most convincing of any writings whatever."

One branch of Sophia's correspondence should be mentioned here, *i.e.* that which she began in 1880 with Sir Arthur Gordon,† then Governor of Fiji. He was one of my father's most intimate friends, and his earliest recollections of Sophia went back to her infancy—

"My first conscious personal individualization of the said Sophy was as a naughty little girl crying in the drawing-room at Portland Place, but heroically gulping down her tears in a series of gasps before her mother's uplifted finger and energetic 'Sophia!'"

Sir Arthur on his lonely island felt the trial of isolation with almost morbid sensitiveness.

"The practical assurance your letter conveyed," he wrote to Sophia, "that one was not forgotten, was like a ray of sunshine in the gloom. If you want to know what pleasure the receipt of the most ordinary letter of friendly chat can give, you must banish yourself for years to the Antipodes. You will never realize it without."

Sophia's offer to correspond regularly with him was received with effusive gratitude; and the carefully

* Appointed Poet Laureate in 1896.

† Created Lord Stanmore in 1893.

preserved stacks of her letters show how faithfully she kept her promise during the many years of his Colonial Governorships.

"You *don't know* the value of your letters to me," wrote Sir Arthur. "It is only from you that I have the political small talk which is so deeply interesting and with which nowadays no one else supplies me. Tell me of any new books one ought to read, etc., etc."

All this craving Sophia did her best to satisfy, making a special point of reporting interesting details as to the condition, occupations and school prospects of his little son, left in England.

Sophia to The Hon. Sir Arthur Gordon, Governor of Fiji.

"30, Portland Place,
"April 1, 1880.

"MY DEAR SIR ARTHUR,

"... As I have to-day come from the Red House, I think you may even welcome this. Immediately after tea the day I arrived, Nevil and Jack* took me to renew my acquaintance with their beloved animals (china, etc.), and to introduce me to those I had not seen before. Nevil brought out the catalogue, and one by one they were brought up to me as solemnly as the Palace officials name the ladies at the Drawing-room. I was nearly overcome by this proposition: 'You see there are twenty-nine people and only two cows; do you think they can give enough milk for all the people want, and butter and cheese? We don't think two cows can.' Carrie, your niece, is now cow-hunting, for in most shops the cow anatomy is not good. . . .

"I like the Red House—the passages are so breathable, not cramped, and the rooms have pleasant shapes. Your smoking-room would fill Willie with envy, and how open and fresh the views are from the drawing-room side, and I do love firs. We had such fun romping nearly all the afternoon, and school has

* The children of Sir Arthur and Lady Gordon.

strengthened Jack's 'ogre' nerves, for he was almost as brave as Nevil. Whenever the ogre was exhausted we refreshed ourselves by nap or commerce, or a story. . . . I was sorry to go to-day. Mother wanted me, but 'Aunt Rachel'* has asked me to go again, and I hope I shall. She was so kind to me (I can't get on without that word *so*, although I try to in obedience to Miss Yonge) and the children were dearer than ever. Somehow, I think love from children and animals touches one more, if possible, than from others. It is peculiarly fresh, gratuitous, and always gives me a feeling of honour. Father, all of us, have had throat colds—from the east winds, I suppose—I wish father's would quite go, for since it began, February 5, incessant speaking has kept up the irritation. Four days' a week there are Appeals, twice a week the Oxford Commission, and on Sundays, besides church, he has his Bible Class, and is also preparing a footman for Confirmation. Mother took him to Mixbury on Easter Eve until Easter Tuesday, so he had three days' rest. We went home for a night in Passion week. Everything was beginning to be spring, such a glory of daffodils, wild hyacinths and primroses in the woods, but one realized sadly the death-blows of the winter in the ceanothus, escallonias, etc., all shrunken, brown and drooping, with no hope of revival. But we have not suffered so severely as regards coniferæ as many of our neighbours, though several of ours have lost their shapeliness through snow-broken limbs.

"Now we can think, talk, write about nothing but elections. So far, excepting Sir John Lubbock and Mr Hankey, no friend or particular individual has been turned out, and Charles Roundell, a cousin, is in. Of small elections I care most about Mr Herbert Gladstone, Lord Colin Campbell, Mr Arthur Elliot and Mr Grey. But of course the *Cause* is won. Father is in good spirits, for it is rather nice to have such a majority! Lord Salisbury said his chief had erred in giving that long notice of a dissolution, and no doubt it did help us—as also did Lord Derby's declaration—but the real fact is that the country was not under the tutelage of the town Press as the

* The Hon. Lady Gordon.

Government supposed it to be. A week ago, dining at the Tennysons, Mr Lecky said that he thought that one thing which increased the doubtfulness of the issue of the election was the great change in the respective influences of the London and provincial Press; and father says Mr Gladstone has often made the same remark. Ten days ago the world was ridiculing Mr Gladstone's sanguine disposition, for he said: 'The Liberals will come in all over the country with a large majority'; and he spoke equally confidently about Midlothian. That issue is still future, but as regards the general election he has proved more than right, and I should like to meet his mockers now; but London is empty excepting in polling places, where the crowds make up for the general desolation. Of course this great reaction is partly due to the fact that a large mass of unreasoning men think a change *per se* must improve trade and so their own individual pockets. But beyond and above these voters, I am sure that a considerable number feel real dissatisfaction with the foreign policy, and still stronger dissatisfaction at the prospect of increased taxation. Some witty Liberals have posted about in staring capitals: 'How about going on tick?' And I think that that represents a sort of popular financial scent, for which Lord Beaconsfield and Co. have not given the world credit. One can't be thankful enough that Disestablishment has not been dragged in at all. One is doubly thankful, thankful for the fact, and thankful for what one hopes is the cause. Certainly stirring days are before us, I only hope personal feelings won't run high. . . . Three weeks ago I was amused rather by Dean Stanley's and Mr Tennyson's exceeding woefulness over their position: 'I am a Liberal, I love Gladstone, but I cannot vote for him, I cannot vote against him, I will not vote at all.' All because they cling to Lord Beaconsfield's foreign policy! . . .

"I am sending you *Macmillan* for January, in case you have a spare ten minutes and would read a little paper I wrote. To please Miss Scott and others, I slightly altered a letter I wrote to her about a dust-yard expedition, and sent it to *Macmillan*. I didn't like doing it, because it seemed like betraying them

rather ; but I was assured the heroines would never see it, and of course I altered the names. Over £50 was sent me for the Parochial Mission Woman's Fund, and also another mission to the Paddington yards has been started in consequence, to my delight. I was much relieved to find on visiting the yards again that clearly *Macmillan* had not reached them. Father threatened me with Dr Whitaker's fate, who, after writing about some town in his History of Craven, 'the scaly inhabitants have entirely forsaken the pestiferous waters,' was mobbed on his return to the same town by the furious population, and thrust out of it with: 'You called us "scaly inhabitants"'; call us that again, will you ?'

"April 4.—P.S. During the elections, Lord Beaconsfield has been at Hatfield with Jim * and the Balfours. Mr Arthur Balfour is M.P. for Hertford. On leaving Hatfield, Lord Beaconsfield, saying good-bye to Jim, ended : 'Good-bye, Jim ; this is an epoch in history, this is the opening of your life and the closing of mine.' I declare my heart is for the first time quite soft towards Dizzy ! For it was no conscious bit of acting—he really was utterly dumbfounded by this turn of Fortune's wheel, a turn he never expected. Good-bye once more."

Sophia was in the habit of keeping careful notes of interesting conversations with her father and with political and literary friends. I think this is the place where I may fitly give some examples. The following took place on April 12, 1881 :—

*A Discussion on Lord Beaconsfield and on
Mr Gladstone*

(Father, Mother, Sophia and Freda.)

Mother. "The accounts of Lord Beaconsfield seem worse. I think he must be dying." †

Sophia. "Poor man ! death seems incongruous in

* The present Marquis of Salisbury.

† He died a week later.

his case ; it is something like a death scene on the stage."

Father. "I don't know about that ; but certainly he is a most remarkable man, the *most* remarkable man of modern times, if you take into account the fact that his has been an entirely self-made career, and the position which he has attained is entirely his own making ; the result, I should say, of three things : great ability, great power of self-control and great audacity. And his present position is all the more remarkable if you contrast it with his position in respect to Gladstone in the earlier days of their career. Disraeli was no one, and nowhere held in no respect ; no doubt, partly, from the fact that he was without any political conscience, appearing entirely unscrupulous ; and it is curious that, as time went on, as he gained in public opinion and respect, Gladstone, I should say, rather lost. As regards Dizzy, greater scrupulousness has had a good deal to do with it."

Sophia. "Quasi-scrupulousness, when he could afford it ! When he had attained his end !"

Father. "No, not quite barely that ; but, as most men would rather be virtuous than not, so, as Disraeli became more independent, he followed his better inclination."

Sophia. "Much the same thing ! 'better inclinations' or to conciliate those who hold such opinions ? But, Father, if (which seems true) Mr Gladstone has not the hold on 'Society' or the upper classes he once had, it is simply because he has more and more made himself one of the People ; don't you think so, Father ? and, by them, he is as much admired as ever."

Father. "His star is at present in the ascendant certainly ; but I was not thinking of the unthinking, but of the thinking, people, not of popular impulse, but of the real movers and moulders ; and I repeat, that not only in the really upper classes but also in the thinking public, Gladstone has not the hold he once had. No doubt as regards Society, this has been the result of his increasingly democratic tendencies and sympathies, but I think the chief cause, as regards what I call the thinking public, is his impulsive nature : a certain one-sidedness and impetuosity

which, as years go on, creates a certain distrust and uneasiness."

Freya. "But, Father, it is a fine thing in a man that he should not lose his warmth and earnestness."

Sophia. "Fine! It is just what makes one feel him real flesh and blood! it is refreshing to find a man of his age full of life and fire."

Father. "Yes, dear" (rather sadly), "it has its very fine side, no doubt, but, nevertheless, it is not a political virtue, that hot impulsive one-sidedness. No one, I think, can admire or love Gladstone more than I do, but I cannot help recognizing and regretting this weakness."

Sophia. "If he had not this weakness, he would not be human!"

These concluding words mark the "almost worship" with which Sophia at this time reverenced Mr Gladstone. The subsequent revulsion which she suffered when the Home Rule bolt flung her idol from his throne was violent in its intensity.

The following notes of conversations at Farringford (the Poet Laureate's island home), belong to this period. Sophia described the daily routine there as "spent entirely in the company of her hosts."

"I am not alone a moment here. I sit with Mrs Tennyson from breakfast to walking with Mr Tennyson. In just in time for luncheon. Sit with Mrs Tennyson until we drive or walk again. Then early 6.30 dinner. Then long general talks over dessert. Then I sit with Mrs Tennyson until 9.30; tea and general talks and reading aloud. I enjoy the talks immensely and one learns very much."

I give three of her notes on these talks.

On Immortality.

"Farringford,
"June 9-14, 1881.

(Mr Alfred Tennyson and Sophia.)

Mr Tennyson. "Look at this light coming through that window. There! stand so! Is it not pathetic?"

This beautiful Northern light; you have it nowhere else. This Northern light in the evening is a thing by itself, and this is the only time of year you have it. *What* is there in it that moves one so strangely? I confess it almost brings tears to my eyes. . . .

"Tell me, if you saw your Father's and Mother's bones, skeletons, lying in the grave, saw their bodies over-mastered by corruption, would it over-master *you*? Would you feel *they* were there? That that was all? *Think*, just their bones, corruption? Would *you*?"

Sophia. "No. It would not hurt me, I know. It could not but touch one strangely, but that is all. I know! I am sure! I should feel that it was not them—that they were alive as before, more so."

Mr Tennyson. "You are sure?"

Sophia. "Yes! though every one told me otherwise. I should *know* they were living."

Mr Tennyson. "Ah well! Yes! I hold it so. I have tried to say it, to show it, that the body is the husk, the shell; but at times these new lights, this science wearies me and perplexes me; yet I know that there is something they cannot reach, cannot explain. When I was a lad, a mere lad, you know, I was given a book called 'Conversations on Physical Science,' by a good author. The book was simple enough, but somehow, I don't know why, I felt differently after reading it. The oxygen and carbon and all the rest of it unsettled me a little, and made me feel less able to believe, made my faith heavier, duller; I don't know why. I was a mere lad, you know."

Sophia. "I suppose there is a sense of pulling things to pieces, and in the atmosphere of the manufactory one gets distraught and loses the feeling of the whole and of the originating mind?"

Mr Tennyson. "May be. And there is a vast difference between the expression, 'The High and Holy One that inhabiteth Eternity' and 'The reasonable and intellectual Disposer of the Universe.'"

On Ghosts haunting Places.

Sophia. "I cannot see the use of it. Where a message has to be given or some direct impression

conveyed, one can well understand. But what could be the good of some poor lady or man flitting about some room or place?"

Mr Tennyson. "Do not you see, it may be part of their punishment, discipline after death? Just as a man is haunted by some old sinful thought, by the remembrance of deeds he would give anything to forget, so perhaps these places of their sin hold the spirits, have power over them, and their continuous connection with their sinful past may be their punishment. We can't tell. What can we tell?"

On Good and Evil.

No date, probably 1881.

(Mr Alfred Tennyson, Mr James Baillie Hamilton,
Father and Sophia.)

Mr Tennyson. "Everything is trouble ahead. Confusion and wrong are everywhere."

Sophia. "Not everywhere?"

Mr Tennyson. "No? Of course there is good with it. I did not say there was not: the two go together, but wrong seems to me uppermost. Gladstone said to me: 'The next fifty years are very dark on all sides, in all matters, and particularly as regards politics. There is a want of uprightness, a growing unscrupulousness that troubles me.' And I think he is right. Evil seems to be growing."

Sophia. "But not more than 'seems.' One knows that Good must gain the upper hand, for it is active while Evil is negative."

Mr Tennyson. "Negative nonsense! Don't you feel it active and personal? I do!"

Mr Baillie Hamilton. "Oh yes! We all know there's some one behind, but still . . ."

Mr Tennyson. "Some one behind? I should think so! Negative indeed! That was Spinoza's theory, and anything more false, more harmful, I can't conceive."

Sophia. "I know I misexpressed myself, but what I would say is, that, as relatively to Life, Death is negative, so Evil to Good. Destruction destroys; and that which is destroyed ceases to be, to exist,

whereas Life causes being beyond being. You know what I mean. I wish I could explain myself."

Father. "Mr Tennyson is right. That theory of Spinoza's is most insidious. All such are. In my Oxford days the theory was propounded that what was called 'More than Truth' was better than 'Less than Truth': a false theory, for all that is untrue is a lie. I feel also as if the years ahead are very dark."

Sophia. "I suppose that which is the greatest cause of anxiety is the general impatience of rule and want of recognition on all sides of the existence of Law in social life, in politics, in thought, in the Church. Each man for himself."

Sophia spent the Easter of 1880 alone in London. She wrote daily letters to her mother describing her various occupations, which, from one who dubbed herself "naturally slothful," appear to have demanded a certain expenditure of energy.

Easter Monday. "Yesterday I had (minus all of you and Blackmoor) a very good Easter Day. First, to dear Early Service. I was so glad my dear boys, several of them, went too. After prayers and breakfast up to ten o'clock I made bouquets out of the stephanotis I had saved for the fourteen boys of my morning class. They were pleased! Then the eleven-o'clock service began with the glorious Easter Hymn; and no lack of flowers or music can really change Easter, though one rather misses them. So the service was very beautiful. The sermon? Well! I'm glad you weren't there! It was one of his very worst! Then Jeannie [a young servant] appeared at 1.30, asking for her reading with me then, before she went with the housemaids to the Abbey. That lesson was a nice bit too of the day: it was the Resurrection bit of the Creed, and it is quickening; it can't be resisted. So, after my second lot of boys (and I had just time to make them beautiful after the class, with button-holes too), I was free from a quarter to four to five. (One lad was so full of 'The Antiquary' that I could hardly get rid of him!) But at a quarter to four I was free; and now you will

laugh, and quote your dear 'Sea-and-land' saying ! I looked in my purse and settled that I could spare two shillings, so I took a cab and went to Miss Merritt* with the rest of our flowers. I knew she was on her back, and her Easter Day would be so dreary. I had over half an hour with her and she did like it, and at five I was at Mary's; and at 5.15 Noel Waldegrave and I walked such a delicious, delicious walk to Westminster. I was there by six and joined the Claughtons, who had asked me to go with them to St Paul's. The congregation was *immense*, bigger than I ever saw it, and the hymns, oh ! so glorious. The sermon was excellent: simple, practical, helpful, quickening. I was home by a quarter to nine, and not a bit tired. I wished I could have walked home, but that would have been so late. I'm as fresh as two larks!"

Easter Tuesday. "The Tennysons' dinner had swollen from 'only the Dean'† to the Leckys, Mr and Lady Anne Blunt, Eleanor and Mr Lionel Tennyson, Mr Browning, Lady Lilford, and Mr Baillie Hamilton. I sat between the Dean and Mr Lecky. I enjoyed my dinner immensely. Mr Lecky is always most pleasant and interesting, and the Dean fascinating. He told me some of his Easter Monday crowd experiences in the Abbey. One was rather striking. He asked a little fellow of eight or so what he liked best in the Abbey. 'Lady Nightingale's tomb!'‡ was the answer. 'Well!' said the Dean, 'do you know that that is the only thing I remembered the first time I saw the Abbey when I was a little boy.'—'And it's the only thing I shall remember,' said the child. 'But why does he turn away? Why does he let her go?'—'It is a skeleton, my little man, not Lady Elizabeth Nightingale.'—'Then why has the skeleton that stick? A skeleton can't hold a stick!'—'The skeleton means Death, my child.'—'But Death couldn't hold a stick. Death is

* A poor invalid lady who lived in a lodging-house off the Strand.

† Dean Stanley.

‡ The monument of Lady Elizabeth Nightingale. Her husband is turning away with covered face in the presence of a skeleton holding a staff.

not alive.'—Wasn't it curious? Unconsciously the child was preaching a good Easter sermon. I wish you had been there last night. You would have enjoyed it so much."

Sophia considered that the rare occasions when she was forced to spend her birthdays away from home, brought her rich compensation in the letters from her parents.

"My dearest, dearest Father," she wrote on one birthday, "it was worth while spending a birthday alone to receive such a letter—something to keep always. Yes, I have thought too, that perhaps it is ordered for my good that I should have this little 'Retreat,' and I am very happy in it and I want to get all the good out of it that God means me to."

On her twenty-eighth birthday in 1880, her letter from her mother ended by reassuring her that—

"You are very dear indeed to us, indeed in a right sense I am very proud of my Fia, and I do not think any one of her many friends, or all of them put together, appreciate my Fia as fully as her parents do, although our respective clever wits come into collision sometimes and we differ about a dinner ornament (whether a soul or a mere substance to adorn the dinner table), our love and trust in each other can never be shaken, thank God. I hope you will have a blessed day to-morrow and that you will feel God's presence with you everywhere. With a very large portion of love from us both, ever my own Sophia,

"Your fond Mother,
"L. SELBORNE."

Her father's letter blessed her for all she did to make her parents happy and spoke of his "heart's desire that God's blessing will rest upon you giving you, as time goes on, a more and more sound judgment in all things and greater and greater means and opportunities of usefulness."

He had a wonderfully understanding insight into

Sophia's spiritual distresses and perplexities; and he fortified her emotional nature with sober bracing counsels, such as are given in the following letter written about this time:—

“I can assure you, my darling child,” my father wrote to Sophia, “that, even when I wish to help you to place restraint upon your feelings, and learn the lessons of patience as to things which you cannot help, I sympathize with you heartily, and love my child all the better for being sensitive about such things. But among the lessons of age and experience, which (if it were possible) I would impart to my children and to all whom I love best, one is, that we may always, if we are not impatient, profit by the discipline of things which are painful to us:—and another is, that we are easily led, if we allow our feelings to govern us, to exaggerate both the good and the evil effects, to *others*, of things which they do not always take, or understand, or feel, exactly in the same way that we do. The combined effect of these principles upon me, is to make me, on the whole, more hopeful, and less fearful, than I used to be when young, of the effect on *individual minds and hearts* of earnest zealous teaching, even when mixed with controversial matter which jars against my feelings, and which seems to me, in some important respects, neither safe nor true. There is too much reason to fear, in a Church divided as ours unhappily is into parties, that earnest men, in both extremes, will constantly run into these faults. No one can be more acutely sensible than I am of the harm which it does to the Church; certainly *not less*, when it takes the form of disparaging sacred ordinances, than when it takes that of exaggerating the importance of accessories, too often of man's invention, which are not ordered by the Church. But I have great faith in the power of the real, vital, positive truth, to correct this in the long run, in the better sort of the men themselves, who thus err; and still more, in their non-controversial hearers; who are, happily, the great mass of good Church-going Christians.

“I do not wish you, my darling, to be other than you are, or to be shaken in any truth (whether of

primary or secondary moment) which you may have learnt. I wish you to 'prove all things,' and 'hold fast that which is good.' But I think we shall all be both happier and better, by receiving, with a submissive mind, all that is trying and hard to bear; and by keeping our hearts open to recognize, in a loving spirit, whatever fruits of a real faith in our Blessed Lord, and a real desire to serve Him according to their lights, there may be in those now set over us; though of course we cannot make them our Popes; nor can we cease to think as we have always thought of those who came before them."

Sophia's interest in politics was intensified after the General Election of 1880, when Mr Gladstone again took office and my father entered on his second term of Chancellorship. She watched events with acute concern, stung to wrath by the Fenian outrages, quivering with anxiety for the fate of the Burials Bill which it became my father's duty to pilot through Parliament.

"My whole inside is with you two in your London work," she wrote to her mother in August. "Love to precious Father. How is the Bill going? Who is speaking? and so on." And ten days later: "I am sure you are happier and breathe more freely, don't you? I am very glad that the Bill has got through Committee for you, dearest Father, and for the country and Church; and it will be an immense relief to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishops."

From the beginning of the accession of the Liberals to power we were all conscious of the electric atmosphere and of the threatening clouds that darkened the National horizon. From Afghanistan, from the Transvaal, from Egypt and from the Soudan, storms gathered during the unhappy years of their Ministry; but the trouble most acutely felt, because of its perilous neighbourhood, was that caused by the fierce seditions and lawlessness in Ireland. The notorious Land League had been formed in 1879. The new

Government found the situation in Ireland so critical, that they were forced immediately to attempt to deal with it.

On February 1, 1881, the Government attempted to introduce a Coercion Bill, *i.e.* the Protection of Persons and Property (Ireland) Bill. It was eventually carried in the face of frantic opposition from the Irish party, who regarded it as a declaration of war. The result was systematized obstruction and all-nights-and-days sittings of the House (on one occasion the sitting lasted over forty-one hours). On February 2nd the introduction of the Bill, on the 3rd the suspension of the Irish Members, and on the 4th the second reading, took place. Sophia gave a graphic description of the scene on the 3rd in a letter written on the following day.

Sophia to The Hon. Mrs Riddings.

" 30, Portland Place,
" February 4, 1881.

" By rare good luck I was in Mrs Brand's [the wife of the Speaker] gallery in the House of Commons yesterday. All the Gladstone tribe, Lady Granville, Mrs Brand, Mrs Childers, Mrs Osborne Morgan, Lady Henry Scott, and the Duchess of Edinburgh part of the time. The scene was more extraordinary than any newspaper account can possibly convey. The swarming host of Members all in one gigantic buzz, loudening and lowering in waves as questions asked were less or more interesting; the dead pause of calm, when the Speaker at half-past five called on Mr Gladstone, ushered in as a fittingly effective overture the extraordinary scene that was to follow. With a bound, absolutely tiger-like, Mr Dillon sprang to his feet, shrieking, yelling. Mr Gladstone sat down. The House called for him in one tremendous volley of voices. Again he rose, and again Mr Dillon sprang up and yelled; and so, as you will see in the paper, it went on. Mr Gladstone's patience and self-control were really wonderful; but the murmurs of discontent grew and grew,

gathering force every moment with a curious *collecting* sound, and *howled* Dillon, Sullivan, etcetera, down. The expression 'frothy rage' in to-day's leading article just expresses the Irishmen's mad behaviour. I never saw men look so beside themselves with fury. Then followed the suspensions, first individually, then the body, until at 8.30, peace and order reigned and the great man began. A body of police were in readiness should any really serious resistance to suspension be made, but the obedience was only a question of more or less altercation and one or more pulls at the sleeve by the poor old Sergeant-at-Arms. I do not know whether one felt most amused or humiliated. I think the latter rather: the whole scene, language (for jets of furious, indignant defiance and 'becalling' were spouted by each and all of the thirty-three in turn), and passion were so grossly indecent and became in repetition absolutely sicken-ing. Parnell is such a good-looking high-bred man; his face (perhaps because more refined and capable of more refined variations of feeling than the grosser-featured, and, in many cases, simply coarse nasty-faced men) struck one awfully by its intensity of rage and (what can only be called) white passion! He looked, as he turned and went, as if he could wither and blast the whole House and Mr Gladstone in particular.

"You should have heard his voice as he reiterated again and again: 'That the Prime Minister be no longer heard!' and 'That this House adjourn!' etc., etc.

"I would not have missed Mr Gladstone's speech for *anything*. He carried the whole House with him; and again and again, as he paused for an instant, the House rang and echoed with its cheers. His voice in beginning was slightly broken as he referred for a moment to what had just taken place; then he, as it were, drew himself together and laid his statement before the House with strong, indignant calmness; and as he touched upon what the House had been and done in its long roll of years, the tone of his voice took fulness and great pride, quickening in life and warmth until he reached his final appeal; then again for a moment his voice broke, and to his 'fifty

years' a fresh flood of cheers came in answer, until his voice seemed to outspeak itself, and like some General appealing by the past campaign to his fellows-in-arms, he threw his cause, the Country's cause, into their arms, and as he sat down one hardly knew whether his voice came from Heaven or Earth. And again and again came the sound of cheers to bind his most eloquent appeal. Everything else you will read in the paper. But no papers can give any idea of all that I have attempted to squeeze within the region of words. Now good-bye.

"S. M. P."

The Land Law (Ireland) Act of 1881 occupied most of this stormy session. The excessive strain of piloting this Bill through the rocks, shoals, and angry waves of both Houses of Parliament was more than human strength could stand, and the health of my father was greatly affected by it. In the midst of this labour a blow fell upon our home for which we were utterly unprepared. Our dear old nurse, Meme, was suddenly stricken with an apoplectic seizure, of which she died after five days' illness. Both Sophia and Freda were overwhelmed by the crushing grief; and I do not think that either of my sisters were ever quite so light-hearted again as they had been before this sudden vision of death. Sophia wrote about the shock it had been to her twenty years afterwards—

" My first experience of death touching my inner life was to me terrible, awful, unaccountable. Not in the circumstance of that death; but, until one who was in my heart was taken, death had never touched me to the quick. When suddenly death so touched me, the shock was great enough to shake my foundations, and that pain has remained like a scar through nearly twenty years. With that love withdrawn, all love seemed to go. Who was secure? Why love? Why live? Why had we been given the power to love? Why did we work, suffer, die? And wherever death comes for the first time, I tremble for those so visited."

My father's laborious and anxious responsibilities with regard to the Irish Land Bill reached their climax during its passage through the House of Lords. Sir Henry James afterwards described the breathless work and anxiety which pressed upon him night and day as "beyond anybody's imagination. It was frightful!" On August 16, a sudden attack of illness from the overstrain compelled my father to leave the Woolsack. The next day, most unfortunately, he was obliged to attend the Queen at Osborne in the Isle of Wight. It was a very stormy day and Sophia went with him to minister to him on the crossing, spend the night with relations at Cowes, and return again with him on the following morning. The crossing in the little royal yacht was very long and rough.

"He suffered miseries," said Sophia, "but I am pleased to say that for one and a half hours I acted stewardess to him and was none the worse. What he would have done without me I can't think. Poor darling, he was sick all the time, it made his head worse, and anything more ghastly than his appearance I never saw. It *was* rough! The next morning I got up at 5.30 and was at the Pier at 7.30. Then the Queen's Yacht Captain was sent to show me over it and to meet father. He really was like a resurrection, so clean and fresh and pink and smiling. 'I told you so!' observed the Captain. 'I knew it would do him good, but upon my word, he did look bad last night.' We had a delightful crossing, and father was only a little tired."

The anxiety caused by my father's attack was, however, only temporarily allayed. After the final passing of the Land Law (Ireland) Bill he went down to Blackmoor, and was there prostrated by an alarming illness, of which his collapse in London had obviously been the first symptom. Mercifully his strong constitution enabled him to make a complete recovery, and by the end of October all anxiety was removed.

Sophia could then be spared from home; accordingly my parents insisted on her starting on a tour abroad, in which it had been arranged that she should join, for they were assured that she might comfortably leave home in thankful confidence as to my father's full recovery.

The friends with whom she was to travel were Mr and Mrs Robert Hay Murray, their daughters Edith* and Mary,† and our cousin, Noel Waldegrave; and the scheme of their itinerary included a late autumn in Italy, a winter on the Nile, and spring in Palestine. Since her Genevan experiences Sophia had taken two short flights abroad: in 1878, as Mary's companion, to the Baths at Ems; and in 1879, as Willie's companion, on an Easter holiday visit to Paris. The enchanting prospect of this coming tour on three continents thrilled my sister like a magical dream.

"Going so comfortably with as many books as I like to take for the Nile!" she wrote to me in her ecstacy. "Think of the Holy Land! I can't believe it! my thorns are having to leave my people for so long and my work and politics. But Father *wants* me to go actually, and says I may never have such a chance again, and he thinks I shall work all the better for it—and certainly all the time for study and all the beautiful things in Nature and Art, and perhaps, above all, really living in the Holy Land ought to help me and fill me, and stretch me and teach me; and in years to come, in years of routine and real work, these holiday months may be an inexhaustible store and treasure of refreshment for myself and those I shall be working for and with."

Up to the day of her departure Sophia devoted herself to her dear convalescent at home and to her other sick friends in the Blackmoor cottages. She wrote to me—

"I am just now wanted by so many people, and to-day I had the Holy Communion with Mrs Smith

* Mrs Leigh Pemberton.

† Mrs Arthur Leigh.

for the last time. She is sinking, and as Mrs Euston is utterly powerless, and Tom in bed (all three in the same house in bed), and Mrs Parker [the village nurse] deep in babies, I wrote to Alton for a nurse, for it was killing the little girl of thirteen, and every mortal beside is harvesting. Of course I would gladly have sat up and nursed, only I knew it would not please mother! Mrs Gunn is very bad: leg awful! I believe on purpose for me! And so it seems that all my old friends are going, and I am glad they will not want me."

One impediment prevented Sophia from aspiring to the dignity of "the perfect traveller," *i.e.* her want of the most rudimentary sense of punctuality. Throughout her life she tried to develop it. She made stern resolutions in Advent and Lent, she framed new and more rigorous rules of conduct, she took her brother-in-law, Waldegrave, and her friend, Edith Murray, as her "spiritual guides" in the matter of unpunctuality; but in spite of all her efforts she would complain: "Yet lo and behold! Sophia Matilda Palmer is never in time! It's truly provoking. I think it's engrain, and that I never shall be. I am reading a horrid little book called "Little Sins" daily, and find nearly all the Bishop's remarks on unpunctuality most curiously dovetail into my actions and life. I chiefly mind because it tries other people's tempers, and I am sure it is a sign of an irregularized mind. It would be delightful if one had been born punctual. Perhaps one may succeed when a hundred years old, and then "Better late than never!"

In spite of this exasperating infirmity of her friend, in spite of a certain fussiness on journeys in regard to open windows, dust, glare, and in hotels about food and special requirements for her room, I do not wonder at Edith Murray's desire to have her beloved Sophy as her fellow-traveller, for Sophia possessed certain qualities which made her eminently desirable as a travelling companion. She was always

keen and interested ; she got up the history and traditions of places and cities and of their famous men, heroes and saints with enthusiastic and discerning study ; and she possessed the Kaffir's gift for spurring unerringly the wonders and glories of old cities and picture galleries, or unknown beautiful points of view in a landscape, or the best places for watching pageants and processions. In her case tickets of admission always seemed superfluities. She never appeared to need them like other people. When she was a young girl she once described to us what had happened on the occasion of a Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace—

“ As we were driving through Brixton, Mother said, ‘ Who has the tickets ? ’ and no answer came but deep groans ! So Noel Waldegrave and Freda got out and returned home, got the poor things, and arrived at three o’clock at the Crystal Palace, having missed all the first part. If Mother and I had been believed they would have been saved all their trouble. We two were sure that our cards and Mother’s ‘ I am Lady Selborne ! ’ and knowing our number, would admit us ; but they didn’t believe in the power of innocence and dignity ! Of course Mother and I got in ! ”

And, of course, all through her life Sophia always did get in, and always got into the very front row !

CHAPTER IV

1881—1882

(AGE : TWENTY-NINE)

ON October 28, 1881, Willie entertained us at a farewell dinner given in honour of the travellers, at the Bachelors' Club in London. On the following day they crossed to the Continent and went direct to Florence. They stopped a month in Italy, and sailed thence to Alexandria during the first week of December. The following three months were spent on the Nile, which they ascended as far as to Aboo-Simbel. In the last week of March they left Cairo for Suez to travel across the desert to Mount Sinai, Petra and Jerusalem. May and June were spent in the Holy Land; and in the third week of June they started on their homeward journey, returning to England on July 8, 1882.

Although during this eight and a half months' tour, Mr Murray, Cook's agents, dragomen and sheiks were the ostensible conductors of the party, Sophia was moving through the glorious lands with humble reverence in the attitude of a favoured mortal whom Clio herself was deigning to lead from place to place. Her unconsciousness of the limitations of time and space, which had so frequently brought trouble upon her in the ordinary routine of life, now stood her in delightful stead. Her spirit flew back into the glowing past, and she merged herself in its enchanted atmosphere.

“Rome quite swallowed me up,” she wrote: “I have never before felt so entirely to forget myself

as in Rome. The past seems far more real than oneself. The old emperors, saints and consuls felt so living and real, and I, much more the ghost." "The Cumean Sibyl is my chief friend." "The life of ancient Rome is so vivid and present to me. She keeps her sovereignty over me and will, for ever and ever." "At Rome, I felt as if I was walking about in the beginning of time; but at Karnak and Aboo-Simbel I felt as if I was in the presence of an earlier and another world." "Do you not feel in the beginning of the beginnings of things among the works of the giants in the Egyptian temples and tombs?"

The Spirit of Place which appealed to her so poignantly in the thatched cottages and Norman church of Mixbury, in the College and Cathedral of Winchester, and in the blue forest pools and Holy-water Clump at Blackmoor, now met her beside strange mysterious shrines, where she responded to its call in awed wonder and appreciation. From Florence she wrote—

"I had some three hours in Saint Mark's and enjoyed them so much, almost more, than any in Florence. There was such great peace and holiness there, and the place seemed stamped with the pure spirit of *Il Beato* and alive with dear Fra Girolamo's burning truth and zeal."

From Egypt she wrote of Edfu—

"Edfu has a living effect on one, such as Hadrian's Villa had in Italy. You feel the life; and a dead scent of the strange worship and existence clings to the courts and galleries: it is all quite perfect just as it was lived in and looked upon 2000 years ago."

Her vivid imagination seized the images of all that she saw and built them into the palace of her mind as

" . . . Mosaic choicely planned,
With Cycles of the human tale of this wide world,"

wrought into her memory for the rest of her life. This was the hidden treasure stored by her during her travels.

"Father has given me such a pleasure as no one can realize who is not inside me," she wrote at the end of her tour. "I feel like Alice in Wonderland, and as if thousands of new worlds were now my own."

Her letters brimmed over with delight in the sights of her eyes and in their kindling effect on her imagination. Before the sovereignty of Rome she bowed her head in reverent worship while she pondered over the teaching of her churches, ruins, pictures, sculptures. A letter written to my husband described her initiation into the meaning of Michael Angelo's statue of Moses.

"Moses in St Pietro in Vinculo is wonderful. At first I did not understand him and I did not like him. But at last he came to me, and as I stood looking at his left profile, the marvellous power and thought of it grew and grew until one knew that Moses was looking at one as an Israelite in intense, bitter, almost heart-broken disappointment, with an anger, all for his Jehovah and with no self in it. From the other side he seemed to me so big, fierce and more like an old Jupiter! but that idea entirely passed away and, finally, as I came back to him, I found a tenderness and deep pity in his expression that almost made one cry. Michael Angelo must have thought of his asking God to forgive, to wipe his name out, anything, if only God would forgive; and there is something magnificent in his attitude and figure."

George Ridding replied—

"What a splendid person you are for a traveller and also for a letter writer! I should like to do Rome and the surroundings with you—only I could not go on so long, and I don't think I care for so many churches, etc., as you do. St Peter and St Clementi are my real delights, and St John Lateran.

I don't think I could get up so grand an idea of the Moses, but I will think of it when I can get at his photograph. Your notions are very suggestive—but I never could get over the horns."

Sophia wrote about other statues—

"I had a nice studio morning, and old Story was very kind to Edith and me, and even initiated us into 'Orestes' at which he is puddling. There is a splendid look of remonstrance and: 'It *was* well that I did it!' in his face; he is fleeing before the Furies. I found the plaster Alcestis (whose resurrection is at Melchet) such a beautiful thing. Alcestis reminds me of Ariadne (because both begin with A, I suppose)! What an eternity of sadness in the Vatican Ariadne! It makes me miserable!"

Throughout the tour, Sophia was exceedingly happy in the good-fellowship of the travelling party. On the Nile, in the plenitude of leisure hours, an academy of philosophers was established among its younger members. The three girls and Noel Waldegrave indulged in endless discussions on every opinion and fact of interest in Heaven and Earth, while their dahabeeyeh glided through the kaleidoscopic scenes of banks and villages and towns. Sophia taught herself botany and made her friend Edith give her lessons in painting.

"I am trying to daub away at such birds and flowers, etc., as I can," she wrote, "I can't tell you how I enjoy the daubing and I feel apologetic as I look at my rows and rows of books in my cabin, as if I were faithless to my first love!"

When some of her productions arrived at home, Freda wrote to encourage her—

"I do admire your sketches. You must go on and practice. Mother is as proud of them as possible and keeps on saying: 'I knew she could if she tried. She always used to do flowers so well as a child.' They certainly are a tremendous addition to your Diary."

The results of some of Sophia's "daubing" were occasionally great successes. At Aboo-Simbel she made an admirable sketch at dawn of the four gigantic statues which guard the façade of the great temple. This sketch was of heightened value because Mr Murray's party was one of the last to visit these Nubian temples for seventeen years. The Mahdi's wars broke out during this year of 1882, and after that date no European tourist was allowed to travel above the first cataract until the extinguishing of Mahdism after the battle of Omdurman on September 2, 1898.

Towards the end of Sophia's Nile voyage she wrote on Feburary 18—

"I grieve to say I have not read all my books. I am fairly grounded in the network of 'Egyptian Historical Guesses,' and shall have read Mariette, Wilkinson, Herodotus, Zuike, Sir E. Wilson, Maspero, Lane, Brügsch, Shakespeare's 'Sonnets,' Tennyson and Browning; and Mary Murray and I are reading Westcott's 'Canon of the New Testament.'"

Mrs Tennyson consoled her in regard to her scanty reading.

"I shall not be sorry," she wrote, "if you do not read anything except what may heighten present enjoyment! Does not that sound naughty? I really do think that to live with one's whole being in the present is the true secret of the highest life, for are not past, present, and future one?"

Before she left England, Sophia had taken lessons in Arabic, and on the dahabeeyeh she worked diligently at her Arabic studies.

"I can read and write," she reported to us, "and I have to content myself with picking up such patois as I can, enough for practical use. No one on board can help me, as none can read or write it. One delightful Arabic little kind of execration is: 'May all the fleas bite you!'"

This picking up of patois was not without its dangers. In Cairo she and Edith had crowded over the rest of their party because of their superior success in persuading their donkeys to quicken their pace by calling out to them magic words taught them by their donkey-boys. This continued until an unlucky day, when one of their friends, a resident in Cairo, felt it his duty to inform them that they were using the foulest Egyptian Billingsgate that he had ever heard in his life; and they therefore reluctantly had to relinquish their valuable verbal spurs.

I must not omit to mention a characteristic action of Sophia's which took place directly she boarded the *Bessie Carnac* on December 15. On the first evening spent on the dahabeeyah, she began to teach the Arab dragoman how to write his own language.

I shall not attempt to make a chronicle of my sister's tour. I can only note certain landmarks which stand out among its gleaming days, the first of them being concerned, not with events abroad, but with happenings at home. It may be thought of as a white stone set up on December 15, 1881, to mark the brilliant end of my brother's undergraduate life at Oxford. He had gone up from Winchester to University College, Oxford, in the Michaelmas Term of 1878. On the last day of Sophia's stay in Cairo, just before starting on the Nile voyage, she had the great delight of receiving the following telegram, sent by Lord Tenterden (one of our kind friends of the Alabama Conference days) to Sir Edward Malet, Consul-General at Cairo: "Tell Chancellor's daughter brother gained first class in History." Willie wrote to her on the same day—

" Hatfield House,
" December 15, 1881.

" MY OWN DEAR DEAR SO,

" I must tell you with my own pen that I have managed to score a First in History. If you were a man, you'd get a First in Greats which is

worth a great deal more. I hope and trust it will do the dear old 'uns good.

"Your very lovingest bro.,
"W. W. P."

Soon after this came the following letter to me :—

Sophia to The Hon. Mrs Ridding.

"I am delighted about Willie, and the thought of it is an endless feast to me, and altogether 1882 begins with real big gifts to us in him and precious Father, though neither this year nor any more can be quite the same. All that is over for ever, for when we come some day to the better, 'better-still' is not the same. Every day I live, I realize more the wonderful depth and livingness of Meme's love and sympathy, from the instinctive way one has, and cannot help, of turning for it in things little and big alike; but one must try to hand it on and realize it as a fact, being as fresh and more powerful now, only one does long to see and feel; and *I know* she is overjoyed about Willie. All the bulletins about Father do me good and your Christmas reports were real joy to me. . . . I am a trifle depressed about my Arabic. I can read quite well though very slowly, and that is something, and I learn from the people fresh words, sometimes three, sometimes thirty a day, but I do wish that all our teachers pronounced alike! Edith goes in only for talking and she is much quicker than I am, but she cannot make out verbs either. Yesterday one man who is a character and acts to help our weak minds, having told us in Arabic that: 'Men beat women in Egypt,' and having argued with us that it was 'not good,' he next proceeded to say that: 'In England women beat men,' and that that also was 'Not good.' Edith, either on purpose or not instantly twitting his meaning, said: 'Yes! Yes! very right!' in Arabic—so I insisted on her eating her words, so she ended by describing by pantomime and a few words most happily chosen that, 'In England no one beats any one and that all the men and all the women are as happy as birds from morning till night!' But how you would laugh over our efforts."

My husband sent his new year's wishes to Sophia on January 1, 1882.

"A very happy new year to your Wisdom! and all your less wise comrades and all your sketches and Arabic and Arabs! I am lost in admiration of your letters and expect great things from the tranquil opportunities of the *Bessie Carnac*, and imaginations which will falsify the aged saw, *ex Nilo nihil fit.*"

Sophia to The Countess Waldegrave.

"On the Nile, nearing Assouan,
"February 1, 1882.

"I don't know whether I enjoy the moon or the sun most now. The nights are simply lovely—one sees the reflections as in glass, and then the colours are only a shade paler under the moon than under the sun. Oh I wish you could be here! For the last three days we have been sailing past where 'Afric's sunny fountains roll down their golden sand.' Tar (Mrs Murray's maid) thought of the lines, and when she mentioned it we all wondered we had not thought of Heber's Hymn before. The dark purple of the rocky mountains breaks out through the golden sands which sweep down with a smoothness that made Mr Murray say: 'Now that is like gold snow.' It is the colour of Roman gold with a touch more red. Just here the banks on the right are very green at the foot of these 'sunny fountains' with palms, tamarisks and acacias, and the crops are an emerald colour. The river is grand and broad here; there are the distant hills of Arabia. This morning the mountains are so very lovely; they are of that particular dark purple or blue you know so well in Scotland; and ahead are more of my 'sunny fountains' pouring down over dark reddish rocks. The bank under which we are moored is clothed all the way up like an untidy Devonshire or Hampshire hedge stands up against the sky and falls over. The Nubian cottages are 'dreadful little places' as Russell (Mr Murray's manservant) says. A tiny open room enclosed in a curve-shaped wall and a smaller semi-enclosure serves for oven and a third for grain-store; all these within an

enclosing wall and all unroofed. Animals, winged and four-footed, herd with humans, and oh! the filth and dust! We went into one the other day and saw two women grinding at a mill, hand over hand on the one handle, the upper stone is flat outwardly but raised in the centre within, and the lower stone scooped to hold the grain. The women wore the regular Nubian dress: nose rings, four earrings, coins across the forehead and plentiful paint in indigo lines on the face, also henna between their fingers and on their finger-nails, but clothes don't abound here. The castor-oil hair-dressing is marvellous, the hair plaited into the finest pigtails and thick with the oil. I shall be oh! so sorry when this existence is over, only as it must end for me to go to Sinai and Jerusalem, why, I can't have my cake end eat it too! I wish I had the Arabian Nights' Flying Carpet to go back home in between Egypt and Palestine and tell you all the hundred thousand things I am bubbling over with. I hope you will all be as greedy to hear as I shall be to tell."

When their dahabeeyeh reached Assooan on January 23, the Governor called in solemn dignity to arrange with Mr Murray about their ascent of the Cataract. Edith and Sophia conversed with him in their crude Arabic, and my sister entertained him with the sight of all her family portraits, including my father in his Chancellor's robes. "And how many wives has the Lord Chancellor of England?" inquired the Governor. When she told him "only one," he could not conceal his contemptuous amazement.

From the middle of the First Cataract came the following letter:—

Sophia to The Rev. Dr Ridding.

"January 25, 1882.

"To-day we ought to have finished the first cataract, but after two hours' work our eighty men decamped with their Sheik as they were tired! rather provoking when another hour would have

finished their business ; but they have kindly promised to return with two hundred to-morrow and do *all* the rest of it ! The *all* is a quarter of an hour's walking distance. Yesterday at cock-crow all our possessions on deck were cleared, doors locked, etc., as '*sono tutti ladri*,' says Ibrahim. Then our own crew retired to the stern, and the pilot of the Cataract took possession of the rudder ; the captain of the Cataract, the command ; and the bows swarmed with Cataract sailors, and a very obstinate old Sheik supervised the whole. Soon blackies were swimming round the dahabeeyah for baksheesh on queer rafts : their performance over, business began. Our feluccas went to fetch men from the shore, and they were divided into companies on different rocks. Where they came from, I can't imagine, as they all suddenly hopped up and the banks were like a rabbit warren, swarming with men, old, middle-aged, young and boys. They shout, scream, talk, row, but that is almost all. Ibrahim says, in tones of disgust : 'I not like this Cataract people at all ! All noise : not do any work.' The sand on our right and left is in quite bright golden heaps banked up. The rocks are, I think, basaltic, bare of any vegetation, only in the shallower pools there are large tufts of rushes. The chief cause of excitement consists in the tracking rope getting entangled or the end of the mast being struck against a rock. Oh ! the shoutings, shriekings, howlings and gesticulations ! the boundings and leapings and flyings ! It is simply killing, and such a farce ! It is all a black edition of Miss Betty's tea-party in 'Cranford,' for they all knew that we knew that they knew that we knew that they could do it all in one day, but meant to spin it out into three or four days, and that they were pretending a great deal and doing precious little. The pace at which the river goes is tremendous, not rushing down but rushing in eddies, whirling one another in the fastest of vales, and in and out the river folk go ; one couple rushing past another and as smoothly as possible. It is an enchanting sound and very fascinating to watch."

In spite of all these spectacular fireworks, the ascent of the Cataract was successfully accomplished,

but a different fate awaited the descent. If a white stone marks December 15, a black rock should stand for February 21, the date of the wreck of the *Bessie Carnac*. Before the descent of the Cataract began, Mr Murray jokingly advised his daughters and Sophia to send ashore whatever they treasured most of their possessions in case catastrophe awaited them. Accordingly she confided to Mrs Murray's care a packet of my father's letters, for Mrs Murray had determined to watch the difficult steering of the dahabeeyah from the safe vantage ground of the shore. Sophia, Edith, and Mary Murray remained on deck and amused themselves with complacently sketching a wrecked dahabeeyah, past which their great boat was being rowed to the usual accompaniment of shouting sailors and roaring cataract, when suddenly they found themselves dashed against a rock, a great hole was torn in the side of the boat, and she began to fill with water. Amid wild confusion, Mr Murray got the girls into the little felucca which was in tow of the *Bessie Carnac* and they were rowed to the shore. There, beneath a blazing sun, they stood on guard for several hours over the medley of articles which were hastily snatched from the cabins, bundled into the felucca and flung from there ashore. Books, crockery, clothes, sketches, upholstery, medicines, bottles, and guns arrived at their feet in hurtling confusion. The gentlemen of the party worked like navvies at saving their possessions from the sinking ship, but the dragoman stood palsied with terror, and the sailors and the Cataract rowers, eighty in all, refused to attempt to interfere with *Kismet*, or sat weeping over the disaster. Sophia laboured desperately at spreading sodden dresses, unmatched boots, and books on the rocks to dry, and at saving them from the swarm of Nubian bank dwellers, who pressed upon her and seized every opportunity of snatching some loot, which they immediately afterwards had the assurance to

offer to her for sale as *Antiki*! At last, to her intense relief, a champion appeared to aid her in the person of the occupier of another dahabeeyah, the *Nefert*, which had passed safely through the Cataract ordeal an hour before. Mr Cooledge and his crew brought order quickly into the confusion, and before noon he was able to carry off the shipwrecked girls to join Mrs Murray on the shelter of his dahabeeyah. He took them safely to Luxor; and Sophia greatly enjoyed the opportunity of impressing on this charming and cultured American gentleman my father's views on various political questions, notably those on the Irish crisis. On account of her untiring efforts at international illumination, Sophia earned the appellation of "Father says." She remarked upon this:

"Mr Cooledge's nickname for me has finally put the extinguisher on my boring people with my own relations! I must say it never bores me when other people tell me of theirs: I like it, but then I have a huge appetite for anything human or personal."

The episode of her visit to the *Nefert* would have been altogether pleasant to her, had it not been for the odious presence on board of Mr Cooledge's pet monkey. With the sure instinct of animals, Coco promptly discovered my sister's aversion to him, and revenged himself with impish delight in tormenting her by sudden visits to her cabin window. A yell would be heard from Sophia for Edith to come and deliver her. "Take him away! Take him away!" she would shriek, and before Edith appeared, Coco would scuttle off.

At Luxor Mr Murray's scattered party met together again, and they all returned to Cairo on a steamer without more adventures.

(It is interesting to record the reignition of the *Bessie Carnac*. In 1887, my husband and I were travelling with George and Freda Biddulph in Egypt.

At Assooan we found a friend of ours, General de Montmorency, in command. He was living on a dahabeeyah named the *Ornug*. His Aide-de-camp told me that the boat was absolute touchwood, and that it had a hole in its side big enough to put your head through. We learnt afterwards that it was Sophia's old friend, which, with admirable economy, had been fished up out of the Cataract, patched, repainted, and renamed—and had thus provided a shell-proof fortress for the headquarters of the British General!)

When Sophia and her friends were on the Upper Nile, warnings had reached her from my father against the danger of undue delay. He wrote at the beginning of February—

“I shall not be sorry, considering the state of politics in Lower Egypt, when this part of your tour is done. There has been and is still, a sort of revolutionary movement going on against the control or tutelage of the European Powers, and particularly of France and England: and it is *impossible* to say what its result may be. Under these circumstances I should advise you all not to linger unnecessarily on the Nile or at Cairo when you come down, but to be prepared to go on the rest of your expedition so soon as you conveniently can.”

Whether this advice was taken seriously by Mr Murray is nowhere recorded. His party certainly did not hurry away from Cairo; and Sophia had plenty of opportunities there of learning from English officials and Egyptian pashas the local view of the situation. She wrote us an account of a visit which she paid to Princess Nazli, whom she described as—

“Certainly very nice. She had on a gorgeous tea-gown of some shimmering green and gold stuff, and her room was a mass of lovely flowers. A Prince Osman Pasha was there, so we talked French, he not knowing English. Just as I was going away, a

beautiful lady arrived and was unveiling in the ante-room. I wish I knew who she was. In true Musselman fashion these good people are all waiting to see what Allah will do; and so this wretched *so-called* National party (which is no National party at all) is unopposed. One great City Sheik when asked by Lord Houghton why he didn't oppose what he disapproved, said: 'I not elected. I not notable. When we not in power we put blanket over head and see nothing. That much best! *Mush Allah!*' *Mush Allah* means Allah does not will it, and they drug their consciences and deaden their energies by this dreadful fatalism. It is always, in things little and big, a shrug of the shoulders and: '*Mush Allah!*' I like the Arabs all the same, but the religion, as far as I can judge, is a moral failure: it has no life in it."

On March 20 the travellers left Suez for their ride across the desert to Jerusalem. They went by Sinai (Mount Serbal), which they reached in nine days. Thence they went to Hebron and Petra, and arrived at Jerusalem on May 5. Rumour asserted that at the beginning of the tour Sophia had tried the patience of her party by her inveterate habit of unpunctuality, but apparently she had gradually "Redeemed the time" (after the text which she had taken for her new year's motto), as the following recollections of Mrs Leigh Pemberton testify:—

"It was a constant marvel to me of Sophy's power of will, as we were an aggravatingly punctual family; and before we started, I had rather dreaded ruction with my father from Sophy's erratic hours; but I cannot remember her once keeping us waiting, which, for a naturally very unpunctual person, must have been a daily struggle. We were fond of very early starts, exactly opposite to Sophy's bent. Through the desert we went on camels for five weeks, and Sophy was really wonderful and got on as well as any of us. I used to be so amused, as the camels have for hundreds of years walked one behind another in a long string; but every day Sophy used to tell the camel driver, 'Ana assoue sour sour sit Ida.'

(i.e. 'I wish to go by the side of lady Edith'). Her voice was very impressive and rather loud, so her camel driver came along by me; and for a few minutes we would talk, but either Ali and his friend talked so loud or the camel gradually dropped back to its usual place behind mine; yet every day she tried it; and sometimes Sophia was so persistent, it would be two or three times a day. We were entertained by our camel leaders seeming to have only three topics of conversation: Water, their Sandals, or the *Backsheesh* they were to receive when we reached Hebron. After which place we rode on ponies.

"For two months we rode on these Hebron ponies. Sophy was so wonderful, as she had never ridden in England and yet she stuck on capitally, and the roads were sometimes very very steep and rough. She had the trick of absently whipping her saddle very often according to the Arab proverb: 'A bad rider whips the saddle.' She never trotted, and, jogging for hours every day over these rough places, showed that she had great powers of adaptability to circumstances and plenty of pluck. It was a much greater feat for Sophy to ride up and down those very bad tracks in the great heat (and one day she did it for ten hours at a go) than for us others who were all well accustomed to riding, but she managed all right, though getting on to her cob was always rather difficult to her."

If Sophia was unable to persuade her camel to allow her to talk as much as she desired with her friend Edith, she consoled herself by the compensation of hours of undisturbed leisure.

Sophia to The Hon. Mrs Ridding.

"March 28.

"Wady Alleyàt, under a palm-tree.

"We thought to do wiser than the rest of the world, so started from our camp at the beginning of Wady Feiran this morning at 5.30, and arrived here at the foot of Mount Serbal at 11.30, too late to mount under an already warm sun, for it is a four

hours' ascent and we should have to ride two or three days afterwards to our camp, which has gone round a day's march on to Sinai. Then came the question: should we give up Mount Serbal or have the valley ride again at dawn to-morrow? Very hard on our camels! So one and all voted to sleep here and go up at dawn. Joseph Hake, our dragoman, and his mates think us odd to prefer mattresses and rugs beneath, stars above, cold food and no toilette, to our beds, hot dinner and civilisation! However he has gone to bring our rugs, etc., and all he can, which is very little indeed, as there is no road and the mountain-sides very rough. Won't it be fun? You can't imagine how glorious the great rocks looked this morning as we started. The sun rose a crimson flood which turned the greys to gold and the reds to ruby and then disappeared suddenly, just as the pillar of fire left the Children of Israel as they started day by day. And to-day, as we emerged from a prison beyond prison of dark mighty rocks, on to this little oasis of spring with palms and tamarisks, with Mount Serbal with its fine purple columns all bathed in light before us, we all were enchanted. But so far no one has been disappointed; indeed, we all think the charms of the road to Sinai have not been half described. The Red Sea, Lolly, is simply *glorious*; and all the rocks which wall its Arabian Sands in their innumerable fantasies and wealth of colour and tint are beautiful. If only your brush was here, how it would enjoy the early starts, four, five, or five-thirty; the eight or nine hours of camel riding and the sunset; and still more the early-to-bed. I wish for you and George and the rest every hour of the day, and I have built now my hundredth Castle in the Air, which is, I think, my best of all. My first castle concerns Siena; this, Lebanon; and both are so feasible that one day I know they will be real facts. Tell Mother that I feel to my camel as she and I do to a settled day in the train! Peace and comfort! I am quite independent on my beloved *Semmerch* now, and with all my little arrangements around me, I have a kingdom in my desert ship."

She read, wrote her diary, and gave herself a holiday from letter writing. She had been a diligent

correspondent on the Nile, having written eighty-three letters to thirty-four of her nearest and dearest relations and friends.

Although the shipwreck of the *Bessie Carnac* was a disagreeable experience, it had no real elements of danger about it. That could not be said of Sophia's later adventure, namely, her encounter with the robbers of Petra. The expedition was one of far too serious risk for it to have been undertaken by young girls. Mr Murray was warned that it was a perilous expedition, especially as he was proposing to take a party with a retinue and tents as numerous as those used at the visit of the Prince of Wales to Petra. The danger lay in the menacing condition of the turbulent tribes, descendants of the Edomites, who haunted Wady-Mûsa. He had, however, set his heart on visiting Petra; and, therefore, he persisted in treating all warnings and alarms as fussy absurdities. Accordingly the whole party (with the exception of Mrs Murray) went to Petra, arriving there in due course on April 29. What befel them there may be best told in my sister's own words, in an article written for *Macmillan's Magazine*, which the Editor kindly permits me to reprint here.

"AN ADVENTURE AT PETRA." *

"We were a party of six bound for Petra; three ladies, two gentlemen, and a servant: known among our Arabs as Sit Ida, Sit Maryam, Sit Soffia, El Hawagis (*the traveller*) the head of the party, Hawagis Schwoyerer (*the young traveller*), and Rousel (*the man-servant*). In Cairo we were told that some Americans had started for Petra *viâ* Akabah, the ordinary and direct route, but that no certain information could be had until we should reach Sinai. Arrived there, we could only learn that the Americans had not been heard of, and that as the Alawin (*the Akabah tribe*) were still at enmity with the Fellahs,

* From *Macmillan's Magazine*, vol. xlvi., January, 1883.

of Petra, we should probably have the pleasure of paying the Alawin without their being able to take us into the valley of our desires. Rather than run the risk of having to retrace our steps and go the longer route after all, we made up our minds to a fortnight of unmitigated desert, and determined to go by Nakhl, Beersheba, and Hebron. Of this part of our journey suffice it to say that we had the usual experience of sandstorms and of Bedoween tongues. Night after night did the Bedoween distract us with their gossip round their thorn-fires, and their parliaments were even worse. At Sinai, and before Nakhl and Gaza, they were two and three nights in session, discussing the endless subject of *backsheesh*, and whether they should or should not go on with us to the next station. We were so well pleased with our camels and men that we begged to keep them instead of changing them as is usual. Now not only was this 'not the custom,' not only did this infringe on the rights of the Teyahah tribe in general, and of the several Sheiks at Sinai and Nakhl in particular, but as each camel engaged and disengaged had many owners, the subject had to be discussed by many, many tongues! Relations came to assist proprietors, and those who were neither relations nor proprietors came to assist for sympathy's sake! To the uninitiated these discussions sounded of so fierce and excited a character as to suggest at least a stand-up fight; and when we were longing for sleep after a hard day, and with the prospect of an early start, it was trying to hear the storm rising over a matter which had been discussed early and late, late and early, for two and three days previously; all reopened because some new arrival had brought the weight of his interest, and the terrible weight of an additional tongue, to bear on the subject of perhaps *one camel!* However, we gained our way, as probably it was always intended that we should, and arrived at Hebron about the middle of April, well content with our escort; and experience proved how superior are the Arabs of the Towarah (Sinai district) to the others. My Bedawi lad had never before left the Tür, and great was his astonishment and delight as we approached Gaza, and still more at the country

between Gaza and Hebron. We were forced to make a *détour* by Gaza, as we learnt on the way that fighting was going on between certain tribes round Beer-sheba, and nothing would induce our Arabs to go on unless we would change our plans.

"At Hebron we said good-bye to our friends of a month, and entered into treaty with Sheiks Hamzeh and Abbás of the Jehalin, after one of those curious preludes without which apparently no business is transacted in the East. We were solemnly enjoined not to let it be supposed that we wished to go to Wady Mûsa (Petra), but to answer 'El Khuds,' (Jerusalem, to which place we were eventually bound. I add this as a conscience clause!) 'Then,' explained our dragoman, 'they will say, pray your masters to go to Wady Mûsa—and I can arrange on better terms.' So this diplomacy was adopted; our dragoman expressed himself extremely doubtful as to our going to Petra, but promised to use his influence! He was successful; the Sheiks were charmed, thanked Allah, and sent for their camels; but their position was that of Kish—the camels were on the hills and could not be found! We waited three days; and then, our time being limited, our Palestine horses and mules were sent for from Jerusalem, and on April 23, our cavalcade set out from Hebron, consisting of ourselves, the dragoman, servants, muleteers, and camel-driver, two camels, three donkeys, eleven horses and eleven mules, altogether sixteen souls and twenty-seven beasts, under the escort of the two Hebron Sheiks, eleven Bedoween, and Sheik Salim Abu-d-ahook. Abbás was the real leader; his father insisted upon accompanying us, probably to secure his share in the *backsheesh*, but he was rather a burden than a protector, being a cripple from gout and feeble from age. However, go old Hamzeh would, and, despite his illness and his hundred years, he did not fulfil our dragoman's prophecy, that 'Old Hamzeh and his horse will both die in one day, before we are in Wady Mûsa,' but lived to return to Hebron, to be resplendent in Jerusalem in new clothes, and, may be, will live to revisit Petra, should any travellers be found willing to go.

"Our company was swelled by two countrymen

with eight mules for sale in Elji, the modern village in Wady Mûsa, who took advantage of our protection; the which beasts, known among ourselves as the wild mules, were always in the way. In the most critical part of a pass one or all would come bumping along and tumbling about, and increasing the general confusion. On the second day we were joined by a fine young Sheik, with a head like Marcus Aurelius, and carrying a spear of imposing appearance. He announced himself as Sheik Sulieman Abu Sa'id, said he had come from Kerak; reported himself as on the most friendly terms with the Fellaheen of Petra, and offered his company and services. Hamzeh, Abbás, and Salim, believed in the newcomer (or pretended to do so), our dragoman did entirely; and we therefore gladly closed with the offer, and El Hawagis promised to take Sulieman to Jerusalem, to rig him out in magnificent attire, and to speak for him and his tribe to the consuls, should he fulfil his word and befriend us in Petra, and bring us peaceably out. A very pleasant companion we found him, and no one was more willing to lend arms and legs in emergencies than was our new friend Sheik Sulieman Abu Sa'id.

"We so successfully impressed the Sheiks with the idea that we wished to go the shortest way to Petra that, leaving the ordinary route, Abbás led us into the Arabah by a pass memorable for its difficulty and for the magnificence of its views. A sorry time it was for our horses and mules, and even the plucky little donkeys were occasionally non-plussed; but at last, by heads and tails, all were safely hauled over the worst places, and the camels were made to pay for the superiority of their spongy feet, and were sent up again for the canteens and some bedding, which, with the medicine-chest, had been deposited on a rock by a poor mule as he tumbled over; fortunately the only sufferer was the medicine-chest; and soon our beasts were eagerly slaking their thirst in some rain-pools down below. We lost two hours by this *short* cut, and were obliged to encamp early, as men and animals were utterly done.

"From Ain Zeiyebeh we went the next day to Ain el Weibeh, and here Sheik Sulieman, to our great

regret, took leave of us. He said he had just learnt that during his absence an Arregat had been killed by one of his tribe, and so, until the *vendetta* had been accomplished, he dared not enter Wady Mûsa where the Arregat abound. He looked as disappointed as he expressed himself, and we took a touching farewell; one only of our party, who had mistrusted him from the beginning, muttered her doubts and repudiated our regrets. 'I do not trust him: he *may* be like Marcus Aurelius in face, but I don't trust him!'

"As early as 6 a.m. the heat of the sun was great, and we would gladly have gone straight to the foot of the pass, the key of Petra, but here we experienced the disadvantage of horses and mules. It was important to find water before ascending the pass, for the poor mules were heavily laden and the day excessively hot. Often had we been tried by the Eastern ignorance of distance and time, but never so sorely tried as on this day. 'Soon, soon,' proved perpetually hope deferred, and finally in despair we turned back to the mouth of the dry stream-bed leading to Nagb Rubâ'i, and from one Dutch oven to another we went, until a steep ascent brought us to the head of the pass. We had intended to camp in Wady Mûsa, but this proved quite impossible. Ten hours without an atom of shade was trying work for ourselves and our horses, but it was far worse for the baggage animals, which could not arrive for another two hours; so we chose our camping-ground, a grass plateau just over the pass, and joyfully hailed the news of water close by. How we drank! how voraciously our horses drank! and by the evening the mules had absolutely drained the pool. Not a drop was left for even hands and face washing; and as our Arabs had stolen the water from our pigskins, our allowance was short. A very noisy night had we, men and animals in close quarters, and sleep about as possible as if we were in the middle of very noisy stables and a mob raging outside, added to which the donkeys brayed more vigorously than ever!"

"While the packing up was going on the next morning, we stood watching the sunrise reflected

over the mountains and plain below ; the mountains, sweeping along over the plain in a succession of waves narrowing into tongues that cut far into the Arabah, were of an amethyst colouring, only deepened where the shadows fell. After an hour and a half's riding over the mountain sides, greened with scanty herbage and dappled here and there with yews, the bare stone heads, red or grey, rising out of the green, we passed under Mount Hor.

"Soon our way led through a valley, now broad, now narrow, shut in by grand cliffs and rocks ; red, chocolate, blue-grey, and yellow, in continual variety of form and combination of colour, with oleanders, herbs, flowers, and grasses perfecting the beauty of the way. The sandstone markings have been well compared to raw beef, watered silk, Sicilian jasper, agate, etc. On one side you may see the most delicate stippling, and further on, it is as though Dame Nature had recklessly dashed her colours, so rich is the effect of great boulders of unbroken red or, may be, dull purple. And these rocks, thus remarkable in colour, marking and form, were used by the Nabatheans more than two thousand years ago for a procession of sepulchres, as strange as the rocks themselves. No two are exactly the same. Considered individually, they have little beauty—Greek architecture in its decadence ; but looked at as a whole, worked into and out of these wonderful rocks, they present a most striking effect.

"So we rode on, tombs around and at our feet, until we came to the site of the old city, overlooked by temples, and the amphitheatre close at hand. Here we chose our camping-ground, and then made for the Sik, where the valley contracts into a gorge. Brushing through oleanders, and cool in the delicious shadows of the rocks, our admiration increased at every step, at the markings, giant or delicate and intricate, and the gorgeous colouring. Standing in a very narrow part, we looked back at the Khazneh or Treasury, as the Corinthian temple is called—and very striking it is, wrenched from the rocks, in uninjured majesty, a temple of pale vermilion stone. But I am not writing a description of Petra ; that has been done as far as is possible by others. We visited

tombs, and speculated over their history ; looked at the amphitheatre, and finally, leaving all photographing, sketching and climbing to the morrow, we gave ourselves up to the luxury of a rest away from noise, sand and glare, and stretched at full length on the grass in a corner off the track, in, as we believed, entire and undisturbed possession of the land of Edom ! As the day wore on, and no Fellaheen appeared, our vague expectations changed to secure content ; we heard no sounds, and only two passers-by stopped, joined us, and of course asked for money ; but after a time they left us, and our sense of security increased, until at last some were of the opinion that there was no foundation for the evil reports of Petra. 'Where are the crowds of Fellaheen ?' we asked ; only Sit Maryam, the Cassandra of our party, urged that we were still in Petra, in a voice suggestive of the proverbial warning, 'Do not holloa until you are out of the wood !'

"Towards sunset, the cravings of nature roused us from our retreat, and as soon as we neared the camp we perceived that our arrival had become known, and that a Bedoween séance had begun. Visitor after visitor arrived, to get what they could by asking, and to steal all they could on the sly. White coffee, *i.e.* sugar and water, was being largely called for ; also dinner ! dinner ! Joseph Hake, dragoman, and the servants had for days past groaned and sighed and wished that Wady Mûsa was over ; and when we had declared our intention of a three days' visit, they groaned still more, and vainly urged that Petra could be seen in a day ; and on this Saturday evening Joseph again begged to leave early on the morrow, for more Fellaheen would come, and no one could say what would happen. At last a compromise was arrived at : we were to start on horseback at five a.m., ride through the valley, revisit temple and tomb—and the tents should also be struck and all packed ; then, if on our return at ten o'clock we should find occasion to leave, we would ascend the pass, and encamp again at Nagb Ruba'i ; if not, we would remain in Wady Mûsa for Sunday and Monday. With this resolution we went to bed, and what a night we had ! Row, row, row ; compared

with which all former experiences were as child's play.

"Very early on Sunday the day's orders rang out in the camp, 'We go to-day'; the chief reason being that our rations were getting low, and the wholesale entertaining of these vultures was a very serious tax. We breakfasted in tolerable peace, only rather anxiously, as we heard the voices rising louder and louder, and glimpses of Joseph showed his face more and more anxious. He closed the tent and begged us to remain inside. 'Money! money!' was the cry. In vain did El Hawagis declare by interpretation that he had no more, and show empty pockets and purse, excepting for a few *bishliks* (base coin) which they contemptuously refused. Money they would have. The evening before 125 medjodies (£22) had been paid to Sheik Abdullah of the Fellaheen as poll tax; twenty-five more as dinner money (*pour manger!*) for the same worthy, his horses and men; and yet another twenty for *guida*, as they call scenery—an expensive view, suggesting a high state of culture! All this might be considered as lawful charge in the way of blackmail. But this was by no means all. Five skins of water were forced upon us, price ten medjodies. The money paid, the water was carried off, and given to the Sheik's horses! Next a sheep and two lambs were offered for twelve napoleons; and there was nothing for it but to take them.

"'Give us tobacco! more, more, for us and our men,' urged Abdullah, as soon as the sheep were paid for.

"'We have none left,' we answered.

"'Then here is some' (offering about half a pound); 'pay for it, ten medjodies, it will do for us.'

"'Ten medjodies for only that tobacco!' remonstrated our dragoman.

"Again he had to yield, and away stalked the vulture with the money and the handful of tobacco. By-and-by a boy stole four eggs from our kitchen and handed them to another noble Sheik, Arteesh by name, whom the servants called 'chief robber.' He kindly offered these eggs at a medjidy apiece.

"'We have enough; we want no more,' said Joseph.

“‘You *must* buy them, you *must* take them ;’ and, after another long argument, the force of power prevailed, and Joseph paid four medjodies for his own eggs !

“Time went by, the numbers swelled, the cook was distracted, and the dragoman driven nearly wild. Butter was brought—bad oil rather !

“‘Here are three pounds of butter,’ quoth Mohammed ; ‘we do not want it. It is a present ; take it, we know one another’ (embracing Joseph), ‘take it.’

“‘We do not want it,’ again answered Joseph, who could hardly believe his senses, when the butter man slipped away, apparently pacified ; but in another second the cook turned round to see Mohammed coolly emptying his butter into a saucepan and adding water ! And when he had by his rising fury won the four medjodies, he took away half of the watered butter ‘to cook my own dinner.’

“And yet another *present* had we, Ibrahim, a Fellaheen, the most evil-looking man I have ever seen, brought four pomegranates. He recommended himself to our notice by a testimonial, signed ‘Wilfred Scawen Blunt,’ to this effect : ‘I have travelled several days with Ibrahim Eltish Mohammed ; he is a merry fellow, and one of the best poets I have met.’ He might be Apollo himself for all we knew (not outwardly ; in that respect an ‘old clo’ man, with every evil passion concentrated in his expression, would best represent him !) ; but as to his merriness, our future experience made us realize forcibly the truth that tastes differ. Mr Blunt may have enjoyed Ibrahim Eltish’s society for several days. We found as many hours much more than enough ! But to return to the pomegranates.

“‘A present !’ cried he, after again falling upon Joseph’s neck, with many epithets expressing his tender and fraternal affection.

“‘We do not want—’

“‘A present—two medjodies !’

“So Joseph offered a quarter, a half, and of course ended by having to pay the old wretch the two medjodies. All this £56 was in Saturday’s budget ; and Sunday morning had dawned to fresh demands

and added complications, for Sheik Sulieman Eben Diab of the Haweitat, ally of the Petra Fellaheen, had arrived with his party, his claims, and his grievances.

"Who told you to come here? We do not want you!"

"To which Joseph answered that we had come peaceably with Sheiks Hamzeh, Abbás, and Salim; and that, as other visitors came, so had we.

"You must pay four dollars for each horse and mule," was the first demand.

"In vain it was urged that the poll tax had been paid, and that no rule existed concerning horses and mules.

"It is a new rule," was the retort; "we have made it ourselves. Give it me; four dollars each."

"I have not money enough," answered Joseph.

"Ask your master."

"He has no more."

"Joseph then appealed to El Hawagis, who for the hundredth time showed his empty pockets, and explained that it was even so.

"Why has he no money? Give four dollars for each."

"I have not the money—my master has not the money. I have paid the old rules; all besides Sheik Abbás said he would pay, and told my master to bring no more, for all beyond he would pay."

"At this Abbás was attacked: but I need hardly say he had no money, and urged that all taxes had been paid.

"Why did you tell the dog of a Christian to bring no more? You should have made him bring much—very much money!" and thereupon they fell on poor Abbás and beat him about, while Sheik Sulieman persevered in his demands.

"You must stay until you pay, or fetch it; and we will keep your people here."

"Then in despair the dragoman answered, 'I will see if I have any,' and to our surprise sent one Abu Nakhleh—that is to say, Father of the Palm-tree—a waiter, to his store, deep within his girdle in the canteen in our tent. We held the door fast, and crouched behind the box; Abu Nakhleh counted out

ten napoleons. They were paid, and the tents were struck, all except the dining one in which we ladies were.

“‘Why is this?’ asked Sulieman.

“‘We want to leave.’

“‘You must pay first for spending three days here.’

“‘Well, Sheik, we have not money enough.’

“‘Don’t come to Wady Mûsa without much money; we keep your party until you pay money,’ and, after another wearisome dispute, there was no alternative but to yield; and again was Abu Nakhleh sent to the treasury for fifteen napoleons more. This is the bill:—

For seeing Wady Mûsa Sunday and Monday	...	20	medjidas.
Water, Sunday and Monday	10	“
Three watchers !	...	10	“
More tobacco for Sheiks	...	5	“
Five sheep to feed fifteen men (why?)	...	25	“
Dinners for Sheiks and men for two days	...	60	“
Total			130 medjidas.

“That is £23.

“‘How much pay for horses from Hebron?’

“‘£3 10s. each.’

“‘Then you must pay £10 10s. more for three riders riding round the valley with you for three days.’

“‘We have no riders, we go to-day.’

“‘Give £10 10s. more.’

“And so our little bill rose to £43 10s., each item being the cause of much discussion, Joseph doing his very best, but being forced to yield, as the robbers were more than ten to one; and whereas hitherto there had been a fixed blackmail and *some* honour among thieves, now (owing, it seems, to the feud among the controlling tribes) there is not even the rule there was. ‘We are all Sheiks,’ cried one man; ‘give all a share’; and besides Joseph was alarmed by the fanatical spirit shown in the abusive language regarding us. Quoth Sheik Sulieman, ‘We do not want any Christians here; you ought to be killed; we do not want you; we take enough from the pilgrims to Mecca; we want no Christian devils

here; we do not care for any consul, or sultan, or king; we are enough for ourselves; no more Christians here.

"Meantime the cook had a sorry time of it, besieged on all sides, punched and threatened by these club-armed men. Abdullah brought him a skin of milk. As usual—'We do not want any,' was the answer. 'You *must* buy it. *We* have had no breakfast; give us bread to soak, and pay us. We will have it.' The instant the money was paid, the skin was coolly emptied on the ground, and water with a colouring of milk, not apparently worth the drinking, thrown away. Abu Nakhleh was clearing up and packing the canteen in our tent; and we kept guard on one side, while the gentlemen and servants did their best without. Again and again we heard, 'No, no; ladies!' as attempts were made to push in. Twice entrances were repulsed; and the third time Abdullah in sheepskin and scarlet, took up his abode with us, and soon a second crept in; and, grinning hideously in our faces, they asked for money. As we remained silent, they, to assist our intelligence, advanced to us acting the gruesome pantomime of cutting throats! Our guard being outnumbered, we were told to leave the tent by the back, as more were pressing in; and we stood outside by our water-bottles and saddlebags, while our horses were being saddled; and soon, in a lull we instinctively felt to be a false calm, we rode slowly away, Sheik Salim leading, followed by the luncheon mule, ourselves in single file, the gentlemen and dragoman bringing up the rear. The great object being to get away, we left the muleteers and Abbás to follow as soon as possible with the baggage.

"Suddenly, as we were passing a cave (which we had noticed on our entry as a capital luncheon place), Sheik Sulieman, our enemy, tore past us, and ordered Salim to stop; they exchanged words, and then, as if by a spell, we were all drawn into the cave, and the canteen mule was unladen to order. There we waited, watching the scene in growing, unconfessed anxiety; the mule and his burden beside him, Ibrahim (waiter) and a few Fellaheen in the van on one side, and opposite, keeping the mouth of the cave, the insatiable Sheik of the Haweitat and a dozen of his

fellows, Arteesh, etc., looking worse than a cat does with a mouse, literally grinning with the power of their position, caring for nothing but money, and ready to explode with passion at the least provocation. Joseph's face was enough to trouble us, so full was it of real anguish; and we saw that he was keeping a tight rein over himself. And he has since told us: 'Believe me, sir, I made myself so low, I went on the ground, I put myself under their feet, I was as dirt, as a worm, as an old woman, as a little child. I begged and prayed them not to touch you. I said, 'For God's sake do what you want with me, but leave them alone!' I was black in my heart, I wished to fight them, I told many lies, I promised many things; for I saw that if I said one cross word, they would all fight, and they would not care what they did to you. They said they would carry off the ladies to the mountains, if we did not pay; they said so many things, so bad I cannot tell you.' Fortunately we did not understand; the few words we caught here and there did not tend to relieve our anxiety; and 'more money' was the changeless burden of the song. At last Sulieiman demanded £25 as payment for their attention in coming to bid us farewell.

"'We have no money; we say good-bye here; but there is no charge; it never has been,' said Joseph.

"'It is changed—I must have it. If you do not pay, you all go back into Wady Mûsa.'

"He then bade Arteesh secure our horses, while the canteen was searched, and twelve napoleons, the last of the dragoman's store, were taken.

"'This is not enough! We want twenty-two napoleons more.'

"'We have no more anywhere,' we repeated; whereat threats were renewed, and El Hawagis declared that he would not leave us, so if we ladies were carried off no more money could be fetched from Jerusalem; but he suggested as a happy thought that one or more of the Sheiks of Petra should accompany us to Jerusalem, where he would pay them £50 and give them a safe conduct back with an escort of soldiers! This proposal, however, did not

seem to commend itself to our enemies, who laughed their refusal in our faces, and renewed their clamour for more money. But there was no more, and at last Sheik Sulieman rose, broke up the conference, and said magnanimously, 'I forgive you this time ; you may go on.'

"So on again went we, old Hamzeh the leader this time, a most deplorable bundle of rags, with gouty feet on a very Rozinante of a steed. Every moment we felt we might be surprised, and the old Afghan stories haunted us as we realized the power of these mountain passes, and the innumerable ambuscades they offered. Looking back from time to time, we saw Joseph followed by six men sent after him, as Sulieman did not believe he had no money. They laid hold of Joseph, unhorsed him, and when he reiterated that he had indeed no more, they took his pistol, saying they would keep his horse.

"'I do not mind,' said he; 'you will not gain much.'

"'We will take the others too if you do not pay.'

"'I have paid four times over what we used to pay.'

"'You paid Sheik Abdullah and Sheik Sulieman ; but we are all Sheiks ; pay us like them.'

"And they drew their scimitars, and one man pointed the pistol.

"'We swear we have no more,' cried Joseph.

"'Then be kept here until your master sends for more.'

"But they let the horse go ; and Joseph rode on, still surrounded by men.

"At the top of the pass it was ordered that we must instantly water our horses at the spring (our camping-ground of two nights ago); and then ride with all possible speed to Ain el Bawedy. Joseph said no harm would happen to the muleteers and servants ; and as to our luggage we had not a thought, so anxious were we to get away.

"The horses satisfied, we hastened back to Joseph, as the increasing babel above made us fear that more of the enemy had arrived ; and there they were, Ibrahim Eltish and Mohammed, his son, and many others.

“‘You shall not go,’ grinned Ibrahim; ‘you have not paid for the sheep; they are mine; you paid the wrong man. Pay me.’

“‘You do wrong, we *have* paid,’ answered the dragoman.

“‘If you speak we will not let you out; we will kill you all. Pay! ask your master—pay!’

“‘Take the baggage, but we have no more money.’

“Unconvinced, the old ruffian sat himself down cross-legged, grinning; and there were we at his mercy! for not only were our enemies armed with knives, scimitars, and clubs, but we knew that in an instant they could by a call people the rocks with Fellahs; and when you consider that they are as nimble as wild goats, and have every man his club, you will agree that discretion was very much the better part of valour. El Hawagis protested. Sit Ida offered her watch, which they refused; and we had another prolonged cat-and-mouse experience, with much wearisome altercation and protestation, and a repetition of the pantomime of the tent by Ibrahim Eltish, who gracefully waved his scimitar in front of Sit Ida’s throat. At last El Hawagis said—

“‘They won’t believe us; we must go; every moment makes our position worse.’

“Further delay was caused by Hassan, muleteer, refusing to move until the other mules should arrive.

“‘Then I will take the mule; for go without the canteen and water I will not,’ said El Hawagis. However, he gained the day, and Hassan yielded. Next, Joseph declared he must stay for the baggage. El Hawagis was nearly desperate, but nothing would shake Joseph’s resolution; and for the third time our procession moved along. Instead of the caravan of fifty-three, counting men and beasts, which had entered Petra, there now went back into the Arabah plain, our six selves, Ibrahim Waiter, little Hassan, Sheik Salim, and four of our Bedaween bodyguard; the other valiant seven had vanished in the hour of difficulty. It was wretched leaving Joseph alone with the Fellahs; we afterwards learnt that he thought to keep them off by staying behind, and was quite prepared to die. For six hours we rode down

the rocks to the foot of the pass ; once we asked Salim if we were safe ; he only made a gesture of silence and looked anxiously around. We halted under a sunt tree in the Arabah, had some water and overlooked our stores—three chickens, five eggs, half a cheese, some coffee, two loaves of bread, and a few biscuits ; and this possibly to feed thirteen people for four days. Our position was grave, and every morsel of food must be jealously guarded ; as, should Joseph and our mules be detained, we had, travelling at utmost speed, a four days' journey before we could reach Jerusalem and organize a rescue ; and there was the additional anxiety as to our horses ; for with no barley, and only such rank grass as grew at the two springs, Ain el Bawedy and Ain Zeiyebah, it was too probable that they would fail us before the journey's end. On we went again, as soon as El Hawagis had persuaded the Bedaween, much against their will, to do so ; they were afraid of crossing the desert in our reduced numbers ; and now we were only twelve, one Arab having been bribed by the promise of a pistol to stay and wait for Joseph, to tell him our destination.

"About six o'clock our Bedaween began to whisper and to make signs ; and we strained our eyes for the few camels and men, said to be moving far away on the horizon. We just discerned something moving against the dying sun ; and, half doubtful, rode on. The moon and the stars were beautiful, and whenever there was any uncertainty about the way, Salim sent his men as scouts to look for footmarks. Once we were almost done, but a strip of sand, with its guiding prints, saved us ; and joyfully we all exclaimed, 'Camels' feet !'

"Instantly the Bedaween stooped down and felt the marks, to know which way they were turned. 'Right, right,' and so on we rode.

"The way in which these men disappeared and reappeared in the desert, with only a shrub or two scattered about for cover, was quite uncanny ; and their alertness and acuteness this evening struck us as a curious contrast to their ordinary indifference and lack of observation when travelling. I was next to Salim, and, whenever he galloped off for a personal

scout, El Hawagis called out to me, 'Keep the Sheik in sight!' Thus at about 9.30 he cried 'Wararáh!' and away flew his Arab until I could only see him, a faint white spot, in the distance. I followed him, not daring to move my eyes: he paused on the border of a sort of jungle we recognized as the entry to our spring; and, as I came up, I saw the three Bedaween crouched in an attitude of intense attention, and Salim also levelling his ear. The horse even seemed to be listening—for what? I could hear nothing, but Salim turned for a second, and said, 'Hush!' which I handed on to my friends, who, one by one, were riding up. Sit Maryam's horse was almost done; and she and Rousel brought up the rear. There we all stood: once more Salim made a sign of imperative silence, and, waving us back, stole into the thicket. We now heard voices, and Ibrahim Waiter said, 'Stay here; I will go and see,' and also disappeared. My ardent steed would not be still, and but for Rousel's help, who dismounted and came to me, I could not have kept my Pegasus from following; and every movement and rustle were to be avoided. We heard voices again, and then two shots in quick succession, then deathly silence. It was really awful, and for the first time that day my heart sank, and I thought, 'We are done for!' It was all over in another moment, but it seemed hours; and I shall never forget the faces of my friends, as we stood close together among the tamarisks, waiting for we knew not what. 'El Hawagis! El Hawagis!' rang out in Ibrahim's voice, and the joyfulness of his tone prepared us for his next words—'Come on! All right! Here is Joseph!' Sit Ida dashed on, and we all followed; and Sulieman, the faithful messenger, sprang forward, crying, 'Sit Ida! Sit Ida! *Marhaba! marhaba!* (welcome! welcome!) Is it well with thee?' He covered her hands with kisses, and ran from horse to horse with salutations and hand-kissings; and in another second there was Joseph himself, seizing our hands, pouring out his inquiries, and repeating over and over again, 'Thank God, you are safe!' and with all our hearts we re-echoed, 'Yes, Joseph: thank God!'

"He had escaped at last, and, with the baggage,

had made his way to the sunt tree, and, fearing we might suffer, had left the weary camels and mules to follow early the next day, and himself pressed on with a tent and rugs. He did not know the way, so he sent a mule ahead, who guided him straight to Ain el Bawedy, water proving a sure bait. He told us that the barley had been taken, saddle-bags cut, and our store of coffee, dates, tinned meat, etc., had suffered seriously in consequence. They had also robbed the servants and muleteers of some money and clothes, but apparently scorned our small wardrobes ; and Joseph explained their refusal of Sit Ida's watch, by saying that they did not understand it, and could not dispose of it.

"We awoke on Monday morning to hear that the baggage had come, and there, under one tent-head, lay the servants and muleteers ; in the full sun, the Bedaween deserters and their chiefs ; and around, donkeys, horses, camels, and mules—all sound asleep. By 5 p.m. the worst heat was over ; and, rested and refreshed, we all set out for an eight hours' march in brilliant moonlight, showing the sky blue and the cliffs red and yellow, as we remembered in Nubia. Sheik Abbás recited a passage from the Koran, which is usual in journeys of danger, or after misfortune. Poor Abbás ! he looked like a dog with its tail between its legs. He and Salim had both wished to fight, but Joseph restrained them ; 'For what,' said he, 'would be the good ?'

"Our adventure was discussed again and again, and we learnt to our indignation that Sheik Sulieman Abu Sa'id (he with the head of Marcus Aurelius) had been a traitor, had fabricated his excuse for leaving us, had sent word to Elji of the arrival of a large English party, and himself made straight for Kerak, possibly intending to sally thence into Petra with a party of his own. Sit Maryam never trusted this hero of mine, and was triumphant in her penetration ! I tried to discover mistakes, and to suggest other sources of information, but, alas ! the evidence was too good ; it came from the robbers themselves. Base Sulieman had not a leg to stand on, and, if a rumour that reached us in Jerusalem was true, he suffered for his treachery. The story ran that he

and other men of Kerak arrived in Wady Mûsa after we had left, and, asking where the strangers were, were directed to Nagb Ruba'i, and, when they found themselves deceived, returned to Elji, and demanded a share of the spoil. This was refused, a fight ensued, and several, Sulieman among the number, were killed. Arteesh and the other Sulieman and his brother were also said to be dead; but, as we had no means of verifying the story, we could only consider it as a rumour, at least likely to be true.

"The third day of our march, as we reached the western shores of the Red Sea, our Bedaween began to shout and to sing. 'They are happy now,' said Joseph; 'they are in their own country again.' And our anxieties were also over; for we now knew ourselves to be near to plenty of food and abundance of water, the olive groves of Hebron, and rest and our friends in Jerusalem.

* * * * *

"Petra, as Petra is at present, is no safe place for ordinary travellers, and one must look on, hoping for future days, when 'the strong city,' 'the city of stone,' 'the red land,' may become the Friendly Valley instead of the Land of the Enemy.

"SOPHIA M. PALMER."

September, 1882.

A year later, in 1883, in the safe shelter of England, my sister was present at a village lecture given by Mr Murray on Petra and Palestine, and she was delighted to hear him describe "the splendid courage and pluck of the ladies" and herself as "a perfect traveller." She wrote—

"To-day year was our Petra day. I am glad to be here, not there; and very, very thankful to God for our safety. Still I am, and always shall be, glad we went, as it turned out right in the outcome: not so much for the scenery, though that was grand, but because it's worth a great deal to have experienced for oneself danger and the sense of God's Presence as I did that day. It was awful, but could I have

seen, as Elisha's servant, it would hardly have made more vivid the sense of His Presence and strength."

On May 5, 1882, the travellers reached Jerusalem and encamped beneath the city walls. Never did pilgrim visit the Holy Places in a spirit of more rapturous emotion than did Sophia. Ten wonderful days were spent by her in Jerusalem, Bethlehem and on the banks of the Jordan. Several of the party shared her devotional spirit, but none of them possessed a creative imagination vivid like hers. It peopled the sacred scenes for her with holy Presences, whom, while outwardly living her daily life among her energetic friends, she was inwardly watching move along the ancient places, as one watches from a window stirring scenes passing outside, undisturbed by the prattle and laughter of the people in the room behind.

Here are her first impressions of the Holy City.

Sophia to The Countess Waldegrave.

"May 9, 1882.

"Outside Jerusalem.

"We camp just outside the Jaffa Gate, and as we first saw this city from its most modern side I was very disappointed; but this changed entirely to perfect satisfaction and ever-increasing love and admiration when I saw it on Sunday from the Mount of Olives, girt with its walls, surrounded by its hills, the sun shining on its cupolas and towers, cypresses and other trees and plots of grass in and out of the buildings, relieving the white of the limestone; with the Valley of Jehoshaphat with its dead army of bones lying below the south-east, and beyond, the nestling village and pool of Siloam; while immediately below is the Garden of Gethsemane and Kedron, and opposite me the Golden Gate, closed until He shall come again as He came that Palm Sunday eighteen hundred years ago. As we paused very often on our way up Olivet and turned to look at the city, we all expressed ourselves in the same

way: 'How fair, how very fair it is! What a beautiful city!' We spent Sunday afternoon in Gethsemane and in Olivet, all in the quiet with our Bibles and prayers; and the feeling of the place I cannot tell. I do not care how uncertain such and such identifications may be; for one thing is sure: this is Jerusalem; there is the Sorrowful Way; there, Gethsemane; there, Olivet; and as some one beautifully said: 'We are walking the way that thousands of His Saints in all these hundreds of years have gone: they in His steps, we in theirs; all one way.' While the others drew, I read aloud chapter after chapter from the Old and New Testament of pleadings for Jerusalem and mournings over it; and we ended with the story of the New Jerusalem for comfort's sake, for it is so awfully sad, all the love and pride and agony and pain that have been poured upon the city, whether by king or prophet or scribe or common citizen; and all culminating in the weeping of our Lord. Mary! I feel a Jew. It is so pitiable, so very, very sad. To-day we went to the Wall of Lamentation, a part of the real old Temple Wall, behind the Mosque of Omar, the only part to which the Jews may come; and there we saw an old Jewess with her Psalm lamenting. She did not see or heed us; she rocked to and fro. We wanted to know the meaning of some characters on one stone and asked Ibrahim if he knew, and he asked her. She shook her head and spoke Hebrew, I suppose; then added in German: 'I do not understand you.' So I spoke to her and said: 'I am sorry we have disturbed you.' The sadness of her face I cannot forget as she answered: 'It does not matter, nothing matters.' And I said (I could not help it): 'I am so sorry for you all. It is so very, very sad; but one day I know it will be set right.' And she answered: 'Thank you, but when? When will it be? It is long.' And her tone was awful in its sad despair, and she was crying. They are grand old stones. We wandered through the quarries below the walls from which they were hewn, immense Domdaniel caverns they were, never used since Solomon's time. To-day we went down into some cellars in the Via Dolorosa and walked on the very old street of old

Jerusalem, which was found in building the new foundations of this house—the very street He trod. Within the old part of the town, the jumble of Saracen arch, wooden carving and white house, minaret and cupola and dark vaulted bazaar is very picturesque, and the people in costume and feature are very picturesque and beautiful, many of them. . . . I have been much struck by the fact that all that has been done in Jerusalem to guard and keep and resist change, has itself changed—and, one fancies, more than would have happened had Sacred Places been left alone. It is no good. One has it stamped into one that nothing remains in this world. Mercifully one has His promise."

In answer to Sophia's outpourings, her mother wrote to her on June 2—

"Your letters from Jerusalem about Petra and the Jordan were most interesting, to use the mildest words. I can quite believe the effect these localities have upon you. The feeling must be simply wonderful and overpowering of treading the spots on which our Lord trod, and His noble army of martyrs and prophets in the scenes of the Bible history. It must at times be almost too much to contain yourselves. You are well worthy of all this, and will appreciate it and remember it as well as any one I can imagine."

This is Sophia's account of her visit to the Jordan.

Sophia to The Hon. Mrs Ridding.

"Jerusalem,
"May 4, 1882.

"Your letters are worth their weight in gold; it is good of you to write when you are so busy. Give my love to your George, and receive many thanks for the Botanical Book which arrived here yesterday! This same parcel arrived in Alexandria two days before I left Cairo on March 20, and in Cairo a week later! So I fancy the system is that of the *petite vitesse*! I only trust my shoes may arrive in Beyrouth in time for June 19, for I have now only my

yellow top boots and an old Gibeonitish pair of clumps. My Turkish slippers suit the limits of my tent, but as I cannot walk two steps without their being left behind, they will hardly suit civilized life! Thank you for telling me all about Winchester. I feel you and George and Father and Mother ought to be luxuriating in my idle life and not S. M. P. Please ask Mother to let me spend a day or two with you before you go for your holidays, or I shall see nothing of you two. They say we shall be home July 14. *Videremus!* At present we are uncertain of our route. . . . Now I will tell you of Noel's and my private jaunt to the Jordan. At 12.20 a.m. on Thursday we started, Noel and I and Joseph (the dragoman) and an American gentleman rather older than Father, who is poor and knew Joseph before, and asked to go to the Jordan under his wing, and a Sheik and three Bedaween; our tents, etc., had gone on before. We went past Bethany, seeing on our way the old burying-ground with its cave tombs, one of which must have been Lazarus' grave. Beyond we came to the Kedron again; and after three and a half hours through valleys thick with corn, we stopped at a ruined Khan, traditionally the one signified in the Good Samaritan story; and there, in the cool of the rocks, we saw flowers and lemons and coffee ready and rested half an hour. On again, up a steeper and steeper road, then down and up again, until we came to the grand gorge at the bottom of which Elijah's Cherith flows and smiles over the Jordan Valley at your feet, until, in the distance, you know it joins the river where the winding course of green ceases. We had heard that 'the road was very bad.' Well! it is the best we had been on for weeks and weeks! a real Roman road with kerb-stone steps, and only at all bad where the stones from the hills or fallen walls were thickly strewed. We had heard that there was 'nothing to see,' and before our delighted eyes lay the valley backed by the mountains of Moab, to the south the brilliantly blue water of the Dead Sea, to the north the peaks of Ramoth-Gilead, and between, stretching north and south, tamarisk and acacia woods through which the Jordan runs; while, as I said, the brook often

seen, and its green always seen, goes on zigzagging to join the Jordan.

"Then we rode down into the plain, and certainly there was a want of air. We turned up north, passing through cornfields with women gleaning, following the reapers; through cucumber gardens with booths and lodges; up a mighty mound of bricks, stones, and pottery; and there, on the top of ancient Jericho, we camped. While dinner was preparing, I ran down to Elijah's spring, the first rushing waterfall I had seen in the East. It was joy to feel it and to wash one's face in the water. Oleanders, grasses, and beautiful flowering shrubs grew around. This was a quarter to six. We dined under the stars; and by 9.30 I was in bed. Joseph opened my tent behind and before, but I could not sleep a wink for the heat. So at eleven I walked about outside; the stars were glorious and the croaking of the frogs maddening! I acted David and took up water-bottles from Joseph's side without waking him; and then tried to rest. But I could not. At last 2.30 came and I redressed, but the moon was too beclouded for us to start before a quarter to four. We breakfasted under the stars! at three, and it became refreshing, only 82 degrees, I think, as we rode for two hours to the Jordan's banks. The current was tremendous, and the reflection of the trees made the water green. We washed our hands and faces, bottled up water, gathered flowers, and I did a sketch that is a libel! and I read the Jordan passages in the Bible, and looked north-east to the home of Jephthah's daughter; south, to the death-place of St John the Baptist. I stood where Saul presumptuously sacrificed (near Jericho). I stood where the priests' feet stood in Jordan. I stood where Elijah left Elisha. I passed Zaccheus' house and looked along the banks of the Apostles' call; of Nathaniel's tree; and, above all, of the Saviour's Baptism; and back to the scene of His Temptation. Is not this wonderful! Then at nine we rested for half an hour and had coffee. At 11.30 we reached our Khan again; had the hugest luncheon of my life! and snoozed one and a half hours, and back into camp at a quarter to six. And I was not *a bit* tired,

and most thoroughly enjoyed the expedition and blessed Noel for it. I confess it was very pleasant to travel so easily; and yet we did it in one night, and most people take two. Noel was an angel, for the old American was going to sleep on straw outside, and Noel made him have his bed. He was so humble and kept behind until, when we stopped for a second going to Jericho, he said how he loved the country and only longed for some one to sympathize with his enjoyment, my heart was melted, and the result was that he never ceased the remaining three and a half hours! He is very simple and quaint. I must write to Freda now. Good-bye. Love to George.

“S. M. P.

“I do love Jerusalem!”

On May 16 the tents were struck, and the cavalcade started for Damascus, visiting Carmel, Nazareth, the Sea of Galilee, and other places of Biblical interest on the way.

Sophia to The Countess Waldegrave.

“Damascus,
“June 5, 1882.

“This* is an awful crisis in our history, and we must energize in prayer for a speedy and thorough deliverance. I cannot believe in Parnell and Co. excepting this: it is possible that, as in the Revolution of 1792, they find all control slipping from them and, if possible, a more lawless tide of lawlessness rushing in. They are, in my opinion, morally responsible for this barbarous diabolical assassination. I am longing to hear more, and cannot till June 17, at Beyrouth. . . . Damascus is truly old and absolutely un-European. The chief feature is that it is surrounded by trees: the walnut, fig, apricot, and mulberry gardens, and the Abana and Pharphar disperse themselves in every quarter and rush through every street; water in tanks and fountains is everywhere,

* The news of the murders of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke in the Phœnix Park, Dublin, on May 6.

which in the East is itself a great charm. To *hear* water does one good. And now we can eat and suck lemons recklessly! My bedroom is on the ground floor looking on to a court with a fountain and trees and marble flags. My room is very lofty, has marble floor, divan and nine windows! a washstand and bed, and is rather like a room on the stage—and, will you believe it?—no lock to my door! But I am so disciplined as not to mind, though I am sure I shall feel as strongly as ever about white burglars on my return. Black are quite different."

From Damascus the travellers rode to Baalbek and Mount Lebanon, and from thence they turned their steps homewards travelling to the seaport of Beyrouth, which they reached on June 17. It was on the occasion of this last day's ride that Edith's Arab groom, Achmet, summed up his impressions of the three young English ladies thus: "Sit Ida is always doing something! Sit Maryam is always ill, and Sit Sofia is always sleeping!" because Sophia had the valuable faculty of being able to doze at all sorts of odd times, and after her short little naps, of waking up refreshed and ready to tackle her horse.

They found Beyrouth in a state of strange confusion, overcrowded through an invasion of agitated refugees who had fled there from the massacres which had devastated Alexandria on June 11, and which had only been stopped by a bombardment of the British Fleet. This was the beginning of Arabi Pasha's revolt against the Khedive.

Mr Murray hurried his party away on to a steamer bound for Athens; during the interval of changing steamers there, Sophia had a glimpse of the glories of the Greek city. At Venice her gondola brought her once again into contact with European customs and habits; and there, finally, mountain pony, desert camel, and Nile dahabeeyah were superseded by an express train which took her to Paris on July 7. By this time Sophia was consumed by a fevered longing for home.

"I am longing, longing to see you two!" she wrote to her mother. "That is the worst of going away. I have an uncomfortable electricity or something which creates a heart draught owing to being away from you and home."

Intense nostalgia had attacked her directly she left Palestine, and almost all other feelings were crushed by her agitated anxiety lest any unnecessary delay should attend the final stages of her journey. When on July 8 she again found herself in England, her delight at her welcome home was almost painful in its intensity.

CHAPTER V

1882—1886

(AGE : THIRTY TO THIRTY-FOUR) .

AT the time of Sophia's return home, I was ill and unable to go to London to meet her. When the Winchester summer holidays began, my husband consented to leave me to spend a fortnight in Brittany with some friends, as Sophia promised to stay with me during his absence. We enjoyed our *tête-à-tête* immensely. We used to pass our days on the balcony of my sitting-room, the August sun shining down on us through an emerald cascade of trails of Virginian creeper, which shaded the whole south side of our house. While from that pleasant bower we looked out upon the austere grey courts and chapel built by William of Wykeham five hundred years before, on the circling jackdaws, the noble tower, and on the russet cluster of roofs peeping above our grassy quadrangle, she led me in spirit through the scenes of her pilgrimage, and we shook with laughter over her recollections of many joyous adventures. In the mornings we read aloud the Bampton Lectures of 1881, "The One Religion," by Dr John Wordsworth ; and whenever we were not reading or sleeping, we talked, talked, talked ! It was a real race of tongues as to which could say most. When George returned, he, my father, mother and Sophia, went together for a fortnight's driving tour in the New Forest and the West of England ; so my husband, in his turn, had an opportunity of hearing all about my sister's travels.

Sophia to The Hon. Mrs Riddings.

“Blackmoor,
“October 25, 1882.

“Many happy blessed returns of to-morrow [our wedding day]. I remember how we felt, Freda and I, as if the world was coming to an end, and an utter sense of despair that night when it was settled you would marry on October 26, though in a way it didn't, and we have pulled fairly along, yet we miss you as much as ever, and no one has been the same to Mother, I know. Still I am glad you married, as you say there is nothing like it! and because, in consequence, George and I have the supreme advantage of being pretty well acquainted with each other. I do love your George.

“Good-bye, dear soul,
“S. M. P.”

During the driving tour, which she much enjoyed, and all through October, my mother appeared to be well, and showed no symptoms to make us apprehensive about her state of health. Indeed Sophia professed that she felt quite reassured by the satisfactory condition in which she found both our parents on her return from abroad. Therefore it came as a shock to us all at the beginning of November to discover that my mother was threatened by a grave illness, which kept her in the doctor's hands all November. By December 3, she was sufficiently recovered to be able to be present with us at the opening of the New Law Courts by Queen Victoria, and to see my father, as Lord Chancellor, receive her Majesty in State, when she conferred an Earldom on him. But from that time my mother's condition was most precarious; and the conviction of the frail tenure of her life chilled all our hearts with cruel certainty. Sophia felt that she had been densely blind not to have realized this before. She went reluctantly by her mother's desire to stay with an invalid aunt at Southborough; from there she wrote to her mother—

"I hope you are really better. It was horrible, and is still like a nightmare to me—indeed I have felt only half alive for some time. Ever since November 3 I felt as if one had been hit hard and left stunned. But oh! one is so thankful now. God has been so very kind to us. You remember Monsieur Guizot's words after his sorrow? 'All sense of security is gone.' And ever since Meme's death one has felt like that; and as if, whenever such a thing comes as your illness, one was on the edge of an abyss or that in a moment everything might be ended and changed. I do love you so, darling, and such times show how everything depends on you. God must give you to us for very long to come, because you see we do all want you *so* badly."

From that time there followed for Sophia thirty dark and anxious months. We had always dreaded lest my mother should be attacked by any grave malady, because, while she bore weakness and pain with magnificent courage and cheerfulness, she had an exaggerated horror lest any one, beside her husband and children, should ever know that she was ill. This abnormal repugnance created very embarrassing situations for us. She would insist on social engagements being made exactly the same as usual, and then, at the last moment, would send Sophia or Freda in her place, to the dinner-party or other function. The extent of the strain that this entailed on Sophia was revealed by her many years afterwards, in a letter which she wrote to a friend who, in time of great trouble, was shrinking from social intercourse.

"Perhaps the hardest effort I ever made was dining out night after night to please some one else, with one's heart and mind strained almost beyond pain by the double life one had to lead month after month for three years—three hundred it seemed rather."

"The others suffered when they saw and knew," she wrote to another friend, "but for long it was

only me. And all the time it was only I who lived with my Mother and her unbroken increasing trial of body and spirits. And I had to help her through the worst. I had to dine out (to please her) and live and be to Father as if I was happy. Sometimes I felt as if I was going mad. The last ten days I did not leave her room day or night. She could not bear me to. And once she said I was everything to her; and she told Father, she really did, she was after all thankful I had not married, though she used to think me mistaken sometimes, for she could not have done without me."

Two great joys were granted to my mother in the double engagements of marriage of Willie to Lady Maud Cecil, the elder daughter of old friends of our parents, Lord and Lady Salisbury, and of Freda to Mr George Biddulph, a distant cousin of my father's. Both engagements were as rich in promise of blessings as the most loving mother could desire.

"I was never more surprised in my life," wrote Sophia to Mary Waldegrave on June 30, 1883, "than when, at three a.m. to-day, Freda and Willie rushed into my bedroom and told me he was engaged to Maud. I was prepared for it next year, but now! it makes my hair stand on end. I can't realize it. He proposed to her in the Epping Forest ride on Thursday, and she gave him the final 'Yes' last night at Lady Sondes' ball and he is radiant!"

"I never was more surprised in my life," she wrote again on July 27, to my mother, "and if my brain survives two such surprises in one month, it is a remarkable brain! It had just recovered from Willie, and now it is quite stunned with this surprise; but, Mother, I have not a shadow of anything over the unqualified gladness and happiness I feel about it. . . . Isn't it beautiful to think of Maud and Willie and Freda and Dos,* real service lives, in their different ways? But, Mother darling, I do feel for you and darling, darling Father. You will miss Freda so dreadfully and you have only this worm, but it

* George T. Biddulph.

will try to be better and sweeter and more loving and to economize its torrents! And it is wonderful to think that such a brute should have two archangels all to itself. Thank Freda for her sweet letter, and tell her she need have no aches or pangs for me!"

The double preparations for the weddings went on during August and September, Sophia gallantly taking her place in the crowded arena of conflicting duties.

Sophia to The Lady Laura Riddings.

"30, Portland Place,
"August 16, 1883.

"I feel so vexed not to have written to you since Monday, but really it is rather hard to do all I must. I have to trousseau with Freda and finish furniture-getting and take and fetch Father to and from the House of Lords, and answer Mother's shoals of letters and sit with her, and talk about George Biddulph when we go to bed until two or three! and Saturday Willie talked instead about Maud until three! and so I sleep until eight and have a rush for prayers and then a rush all day. And I do so want to do my duty and as well for Mother as ever I can. She is getting on first rate, thank God. I can't tell you how Willie has been—such a help—with Father."

I was at Schwalbach going through a cure there, and Sophia did her best to keep me informed as to our mother's progress.

Sophia to The Lady Laura Riddings.

"August 21.

"The world is wagging along as it should; and Mother getting on first rate. Father rather tired; that is natural. He and I came here, to Mr Thompson Hankey's, Shipborne Grange, on Saturday last, and I am staying on two days to help them with fat old Lord Lyons. Willie is in London, trousseau done,

ditto furnishing, and Mother downstairs, so I am pretty spareable, still it would have been much more convenient not to have stayed on, but Mrs Hankey wrote three times and would not take the refusal, as Mother would not let me say she was not quite well. . . . The G.O.M. made a magnificent finale on Saturday night, and the *Record* and *Rock* will, I should guess, bring an action against us for sitting until 3 a.m. Sunday to get through Supply. The poor Members looked objects for pity—yellow, green, and dirty. Wasn't Healy more disgusting than ever on Monday week back? Father says such behaviour will in future be 'noticed.' I hope so! One read it and only felt heavily, I mean in a dull way, *rather* disgusted; formerly one would have imagined the rope in immediate action on Tower Hill!"

The weddings took place on October 3, 1883, of Freda and George Biddulph at Blackmoor; and on October 27, of Willie and Maud Cecil in London. The loss of Freda's and Willie's companionship within three weeks of each other, at this time of heavy care, fell very severely on Sophia. Hitherto, in all emergencies, she had been able to consult and share her anxieties with them, and to brace herself by contact with their faith and courage. While Willie had calmed her with his quick judgment, comfortably free from nervous exaggerations, Freda had obtained for her constant relaxation by taking the place of special home daughter, thus setting her free for the intercourse with her intimate friends, which always acted on her temperament like mental ozone.

Now Sophia was left the sole child at home, with double responsibility and no brother or sister immediately at her elbow with whom she could take counsel or exchange jokes. It was her first experience of loneliness, strange to one like Sophia, who had hitherto been one of a flock—"a lopped sensation," she defined it. Happily there was the most perfect understanding between her and her parents. "My

dear everlasting P.," my father would fondly call her after his favourite perennial sweetpea, in allusion to her being the only one of his daughters who had not changed her surname initial.

Willie wrote to her from his honeymoon retreat a birthday letter—

"MY DEAREST So,

"Many, many happy returns of to-day from Maud and myself. Bless you, old girl, from the bottom of my heart. I cannot tell you what a help you have been to me all these years, or how much I owe to the example of your unselfishness and force of character.

"Yours most lovingly,
"W."

The following letters show how Sophia's mind was at this time much exercised upon the problems of Socialism and Imperial Federation which had begun to loom upon the political horizon :—

Sophia to The Hon. Sir Arthur Gordon.

"January 17, 1884.

"I hope that in your new work* you may find some congenial men among your ministers: that makes all the difference. Christianity makes one tolerate, but toleration is more or less of a discipline at best, and to be with, and work with, those who are *simpatica* is a delight. It's a pity all the wooden-souled uncongenials anyhow can't be mated and lumped together, as they would be quite as happy and others happier! only the world might be the worse. We have delightful letters from Maud and Willie from Milan, Bologna, Florence, Pisa, Siena, Orvieto, and now *Rome*. Is not that a grand roll of names? and do you not read the word *ROME* with a sympathetic inward jump? I am longing for their Roman letters: they are sure to feel that eerie feeling of home there. It is as if one had been there before,

* As Governor of Ceylon.

only all is strange and unknown; but I never felt a stranger: on the contrary, I felt claimed; and so people of all nations feel, and it must be that Rome is really our Great Mother.

"You will be amused when I tell you that every letter I have had from Willie has been partially devoted to Henry George's 'Progress and Poverty.' There is some fine writing, the man believes what he says, and that is about all you can say that is not condemnatory. It is full of *astounding* misrepresentations, false quantities and balderdash, and is truly as Willie puts it: 'rotten from beginning to end.' The strongest Radical friends of the Government are giving George the cold shoulder; and, if from no better reason, see that, with an election in prospect, it won't pay for us to support, or even coquette with, George or the out-and-out Socialists. It's a queer wave this Socialism; and if it were to gain ground, would ruin England (taking England in its Home and Imperial sense), but one trusts to the common sense of John Bull for the withering up shortly of this idiotic movement. Canon Shuttleworth, Mr Stewart Headlam, some of the St Alban's Brotherhood, and other clergymen have taken it up: they and Bradlaugh quote one another (in expurgated editions!). Politics and enthusiasms, like poverty, make strange bedfellows! Father gets rather down over politics and religion, and says that it needs all one's faith to be at all hopeful for the future; but do not you think that we are all in a boil? and that a boil cannot be permanent? While it lasts, one sees scum and bubbles, but underneath within is good stuff and clean and cleanable, and that, instead of our hearts' fainting, we should consider the real earnestness and struggling after light and truth which has taken the place of the old indifference and heaviness in the lower and middle classes?

"Last night father gave away 300 prizes at the Polytechnic. It was a splendid sight all these boys and young men (8000 names down for classes for 1884). Father made a beautiful speech on the true Brotherhood of Men, on work, success, and the incalculable gain of moral and mental strength and happiness, the certain reward of all real work. And

he made a pathetic protest against all slop-work, and quoted some of the great men who gave themselves to their work, dwelling especially on Ghiberti's forty-nine years, the very heart of his life, over two gates, for which work he had prepared himself, with, as Ghiberti said: 'infinite diligence and love.' The boys 'took it,' to use an expressive provincialism, and I am sure it must help them always. But I thought as I looked at them, and as I remembered the absolute sacrifice of time, mind, money, health of those* who had years before begun this work (only lately moved into the Polytechnic), and as I looked at George Biddulph and Mr Pelham, who each have similar Institutes and Clubs, and as I thought of the efforts up and down England, and the lives of men and women poured out upon this Altar of Service—Christ's day is *not* over, let who will say so. And all this and the thousands and thousands who are regular Communicants should surely help us to keep up heart."

The Hon. Sir Arthur Gordon to Sophia.

"The Pavilion, Kandy,
"February 22, 1884.

"I have now read a good deal of H. George, and quite agree with Wolmer that it is 'rotten from beginning to end,' but I am less sanguine than you are as to the effect of the healthy feeling of the country in squashing the mischief likely to result from such teaching. John Bull utterly rejects it, no doubt, but John's affairs have gone very much out of the hands of that respectable old gentleman. None of us, I think, make sufficient of the enormous power of energetic minorities. It is to my mind one of the greatest lessons of the French Revolution, to which Jacques Bon Homme was as much opposed, as John Bull would be to really radical changes in England. You say 'a boil cannot last for ever,' and that the seething and bubbling will cease. I am not so sure of that; nor would you be, if you had looked down, like me, on the agitated waters of one of the boiling lakes of

* Mr Quintin Hogg and his band of helpers.

New Zealand, the clear green waves of which break for ever in scalding ripples on its stony margin. The passions of hell are, I fear, eternal, and they can do much to make a lasting hell on earth."

Sophia to The Hon. Sir Arthur Gordon.

" February 22, 1884.

"It is curious how in this 19th century the vitality of Faith has asserted itself in this extraordinary, almost superstitious, belief in General Gordon. It was a daring throw to send him, and with him we stand or fall. I wonder if Mr Gladstone was right in his idea that if Gordon fails, a great shock will be given to thousands who will, if he succeeds, be confirmed in faith. 'He is like one of the old prophets,' said Mr Gladstone. But I remembered 'Moses and the prophets,' and thought that, whatever the momentary effect might be, the real faith in God does not live in such single and visible results merely, however striking and even miraculous as some would say. Mr Gladstone told me that Gordon is being prayed for in Mecca. Mecca and Mr Spurgeon and the Abbey and St. Paul's. How delighted Dean Stanley would have been! The Gladstones and we were dining with Lord and Lady Reay on Wednesday, and besides, there were Mr Browning, the Lord Advocate, Lord Acton, and Sir Hercules and Lady Robinson. Sir Hercules talked to me after dinner. He seems considerably bitten with Seeley's book, 'The Expansion of England,' and as difficult to bring to definite points as are all the other admirers of Mr Seeley. They number Mr Forster, Lord Carnarvon, and Lord Reay among them, and these Greater-British wax enthusiastic, and hold out magnificent hopes, but have no answer to Mr Morley's questions and objections in February's number of *Macmillan's Magazine* (an excellent paper), except: 'so narrow, so unpatriotic. We do not say that at the present moment such a Federation of all the Colonies would be possible, but, very soon.' I love my country with all my heart; and I am proud of our Empire, and very, very proud of India particularly, despite certain

dark passages in the past, and the wretched selfishness connected with it in the present ; but I cannot see that there is any patriotism in indulging untenable theories or in speaking in loose glowing phrases about those which must be dealt with in dry facts ; or, it is only words, and thus untrue. Do read Morley's Article and tell me what you think of it. I am sorry you take such a gloomy view of politics. Indeed, I think there is cause for great anxiety, and one cannot help feeling the trial of changes, but there is so much that is true, noble and strong, that I look for good even in politics ! Only this is a time of changes, and therefore full of unrest, and charged with the peculiar difficulties and temptations of such times. Father enjoins Willie and other young men to look to truth and principle above all things ; and I trust, I feel confident, he will. But as Mr Gladstone said : 'Love of power is the awful snare in politics ; and the more dangerous because it often is so subtle, and under the guise of "A Cause" appeals where lower temptations are powerless.'

"Society (in its larger sense, including all mankind !) is a kaleidoscope now, and one is continually surprised by people turning up in unexpected groups and conjunctions, and this has both a nullifying and cementing effect ; but also I fear men are losing the sharp clear edge of truth."

On May 1, 1884, St Philip and St James' Day, my husband was consecrated the first Bishop of the newly formed Diocese of Southwell. Our move from Winchester into the Midlands had to be accomplished in a hurried manner after Easter. Sophia came to help me in the difficult undertaking of arranging our furniture, pictures and ten tons of books in the unfamiliar rooms of Thurgarton Priory, our new home. It had formerly been an Augustinian House of great importance, and was situated three miles from Southwell Cathedral. On May 10, the Bishop being away on diocesan duties, she and I arrived at Thurgarton, determined to get everything into order during his week of absence.

We worked furiously during our short week ; and, thanks to Sophia's energy and genius for arranging furniture, we succeeded in reducing the chaos into pleasant order. She gloated over the undignified and awkward situations in which we were found by premature visitors. One afternoon I was summoned from a dusty job on which we were engaged to receive a solemn call from an eccentric old gentleman. Not knowing of this visitor's arrival, she burst into the room, to be met at the door by a stern look of disapproval cast by him on her dishevelled head. She promptly retired, to overhear with glee his remark to me : "I am reminded of our County Lunatic Asylum. I am an official visitor there, and I regret to say that we have a great deal of trouble with the female servants, they will not wear proper caps!"

Sophia's sense of humour treasured up all gems of absurd and funny sayings which were strewn in her way.

Sophia to The Hon. Sir Arthur Gordon.

"Thurgarton Priory, Southwell,
"May 14, 1884.

"I had never been at a Consecration before, and I had no idea that our Anglican Ritual could be so rich and impressive. In St Paul's, everything has double effect, owing to the perfect order, reverence and real grandeur, no petty imitations, no tawdriness, but Anglican grand simplicity. We were in our places some time too early, and already under the dome every seat was filled by people from the new diocese, overflowings of Winchester, and a large contribution of boys. During the service, while George was being garmented with his rochet, Mendelssohn's 'How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things !' was sung, and most perfectly. So also was the *Veni Creator*. The Archbishop * made the most of every act, giving a

* Archbishop Benson.

solemnity and meaning, a deep awfulness which impressed us. I shall never forget the sight of George kneeling on the Altar step before the throne, the Bishops (London, Ely, St Albans, Rochester, Oxford, Newcastle, Carlisle, Durham, Lincoln and Lichfield) gathered closely round to lay hands; and the Archbishop a step above, his face lifted upwards, his whole soul in it. Then the immense number of communicants struck me, men, women, boys; and the 'Holy, Holy, Holy!' as it rose and fell and circled through the dome made one feel in the Revelation; indeed it *was* a Vision. And the chant of the Lord's Prayer at the close, so exquisite in its pleading, its certainty, longing, and courage: I never heard anything like it. The music has a fresh interpretation, and the Amen after the Blessing was sung, wafting on and on and on in an exquisite harmony. It was Heaven. George Riddings went off immediately on a round of confirmations and thence to Convocation this week, and I was jobbed to help Laura settle. They are the happy owners of a wealth of beautiful things and books, but one is only now able to rejoice again in them, now that, after many days of hard labour she, I, carpenters, and housemaids—they are all in place on walls and shelf. I have lost my heart to this old Priory, and even George and Laura's smitten hearts are happier and more content here than they at all meant to be!"

The Hon. Sir Arthur Gordon to Sophia.

"The Pavilion, Kandy,
"June 20, 1884.

"You write as if you have never before heard that wonderful 'Amen' in the Communion Service at St Paul's. It is, as you say, 'heavenly.' Stainer picked it up by chance, somewhere in Italy. I quite agree with what you say as to the decent solemnity of the ritual there (St Paul's, not Italy). I was at Southwell in 1848. It is so long ago that I dare say it is greatly changed since, but the quiet little country town left a very pleasant impression on my mind. In those days the Minster had not had an atom of restoration; coals were kept in one of the aisles, and

there were whitewash and deal partitions everywhere. No doubt it has since then been much smartened up. No doubt it wanted it in many ways, but yet there was a picturesqueness and peace about the old dreamy neglected place which it probably does not now possess. I believe my honest feeling is rather one of regret at the scraping, scrubbing and upsetting which it must have had, though no doubt much restoration was absolutely necessary.

"I too have been attending ecclesiastical 'functions,' but of a very different character: having been present a few nights ago at what is (incorrectly) called an 'Ordination' of Buddhist monks. It should really be called their 'Profession.' I have very seldom been present at any ceremony more striking or more powerfully interesting, and if time allows me I will attempt to describe it for you in some detail. These Professions take place every year, once a week, during the month of June. They are always held in the evening and in the large hall of the big monastery (Malwatté) on the other side of the Lake: *not* the temple where the 'tooth' is kept. I drove to the Monastery last Monday night and found the service just about to commence. We were brought into a large and very well lighted hall, consisting of a nave and aisles—the latter very narrow, the nave very broad—an arrangement you always see in the oldest rock-cut Buddhist temples and caves. In one of the aisles a rich carpet of gold and red silk had been spread for me to sit on, and cushions for the Government Agent and my Secretary. (Chairs are prohibited by the monastic rule.) The nave was occupied by the monks, who, to the number of about fifty, sat in two rows facing each other on each side of the nave just within the pillars (where the stalls would be in an English choir). They sat cross-legged on the floor, which was covered with handsome carpets. Of course they all wore their yellow robes. At the upper end of the room, midway between the two lines of monks on a rather high cushion, sat the Abbot or President. At the lower end of the room, facing the Abbot, were the candidates for admission into the Order. They were a striking sight, eight in number. Exactly in the same spirit in which an

intending nun is dressed as a bride and loaded with jewels, these eight men stood between the lines of yellow-robed monks. Gorgeous in the richest Oriental lay dresses, costly bracelets of gold and silver on their arms, chains of jewels and gold round their necks, clothes of the richest and gayest stuffs and fine shawls, turbans, and girdles: each was attended by a monk, his 'tutor.' The ceremony began by the first candidate walking up the hall with his tutor by his side and carrying in his arms a bundle covered with a white cloth which contained the yellow monastic dress. Standing before the Abbot (who has meanwhile come down from his seat to a lower one nearer one side of the room), he asks to be received into the Order 'for the destruction of sorrow and the attainment of Nirvana.' The Abbot slowly ties the band of the bundle round the neck of the candidate, repeating as he does so in a loud slow chant a formula of meditation on the perishable nature of the body. The candidate rises, returns with his tutor to the lower end of the hall, where his ornaments and lay dress are gradually taken off, and the yellow robes (there are three) one by one put on. While this is going on, another candidate repeats the first part of the ceremony. When the robes are on, the candidate, now no longer a dazzling bejewelled object, but in the plainest monastic dress, returns to the upper part of the room, and addressing his tutor asks to be instructed in the 'Three Refuges.' The tutor chants them, word by word and line by line, throughout, making the new monk repeat it after him, the candidate kneeling all the while. This was very solemn and very impressive. The Three Refuges are—

"I put my trust in Buddha's Teaching,
"I put my trust in the Law,
"I put my trust in the Order.

Then they repeat in the same manner the ten Buddhist Commandments, and then the candidate, rising up, makes a short speech and retires.

"Here the ceremony may stop, if the candidate is (as they say here) only going to take 'Deacon's Orders,' or, as I should say, to enter the Novitiate. But if (as in this case) he is prepared at once to go

farther, he at once returns with his tutor and, standing before the Abbot, asks leave to speak; which, being granted, he kneels down and prays to be admitted to the vow of mutual assistance and support. This being granted, his alms bowl is strapped on and he is subjected to an examination in the commands of Buddha. Then he retires to the end of the room and two tutors examine him as to his qualifications. Is he a freeman? Is he not a soldier? Is he of full age? Has he his parents' permission? Has he been properly instructed? Is he free from disabling disease? and many similar questions. This done, he is brought back in front of the Abbot, and the two tutors again examine him in the same terms. They report that the examination is satisfactory, and then one of them asks the assembly whether they 'ordain' the candidate? This is solemnly asked three times, and objectors urged to speak or thereafter hold their peace. After the third time, the tutors declare that the assembly has, by its silence, assented. The proceedings are then terminated by two tutors chanting in unison a very beautiful Admonition to the new monk, to which he responds at regular intervals '*Ama Bhanté*,' 'True, O Lord.' The whole ceremony was intensely impressive, very quiet and solemn. We were the only spectators. I never was more forcibly struck with the non-idolatrous character of Buddhism. There was a large statue of Buddha at one end of the hall, but no reverence was made to it, no part of the service addressed to it or any reference made to its presence."

After the Bishop's enthronement in his cathedral on May 28, at which Sophia and our parents were present, I saw very little of her until the following September. Her letters during that summer were brimming over with concern for the fate of the Franchise Bill, and with speculations on the possible consequences of its rejection by the House of Lords. She was present in Westminster Abbey at the wedding of Mr Hallam Tennyson to Miss Audrey Boyle.

"It was very remarkable," she wrote, "in Henry VII.'s Chapel, where so much one cares for has begun

or ended, and with beautiful music and great men all around—that struck me a good deal—the underlying dead of whom some one said that ‘there the mighty Dead are crowned,’ and great men standing on the dead around one. Mr Gladstone, Father, Lord Tennyson, Mr Browning, and a galaxy of lesser great. At the other son’s wedding Carlyle was present, I remember. The poet looked really magnificent. He chose the Trinity hymn of Bishop Heber, and said: ‘To me it is the perfectly satisfactory hymn. It is all one wants.’ We have been reading an interdicted book by a Madame D’Aubigny called ‘La Société de Berlin.’ Clever, odious. You hardly knew whom you most disliked, writer or subjects. Father chiefly read it because of the horrid fascination Bismarck has for him. Perhaps you know that Napoleon I. is the Duke of Argyll’s outward form for the Devil? Father feels much the same about Bismarck. There is an uncommonly clever and agreeable son, Count Herbert, over here now—and was last year also. He comes whenever anything is to be done, much to Count Munster’s disgust! . . . We are all very happy at Blackmoor, as happy as if there was no sin, sorrow, nor Franchise rejected.”

Mary, who was a good deal at Blackmoor that summer, wrote to me about Sophia’s efforts to give herself up to family claims and trifling duties.

“ It strikes me that Sophy is much more at leisure than she used to be. She does not give one that feeling of impossibility of speaking to her or finding her. Every one benefits in consequence. I don’t know if she has given up a great deal or has found how to manage better, but the result is very pleasant. She is so bright and ready to do or see after whatever needs doing at the minute.”

Mary’s presence at Blackmoor set Sophia free to go to Dalmeny,* Lady Rosebery being her devoted friend. The visit was paid on an interesting occasion, when a large house party had gathered there from

* The Scotch home of Lord Rosebery.

August 27, to September 5, to meet Mr and Mrs Gladstone; for the great statesman was making Dalmeny the centre from which he was carrying on his Midlothian Campaign. On August 30, Mary wrote to Sophia begging her to stay on at Dalmeny without making herself anxious about matters at home.

"The world wags smoothly, but we all miss you notwithstanding. There is a certain spicyness lacking, which is always present when you are here, and I miss you much about the house. Bless you, darling. I do so enjoy thinking of your enjoying yourself."

Sophia to The Hon. Sir Arthur Gordon.

"September 10, 1884.

"The meetings were wonderful to see: the speeches wonderful to hear. The Grand Old Man was Titanic. His force and vitality impressed me more than ever—and as one looked at him and the eight thousand on Saturday and Monday, and the sixteen or eighteen thousand (to take minimum and maximum) on Tuesday night in the Waverley Market of Edinburgh—the thousands hanging on the words of one man—all in his power—all literally quivering to his touch—one positively trembled at the power of man. I doubt if an English audience would have so impressed one: the Scotch are exceptionally quick to 'twig,' and the lighting of their faces to a good point was as one flash before the thunder of applause. And the enthusiasm! Extraordinary! Great on Saturday, greater Monday so as to kindle us all to an uncontrollable pitch, but so much greater on Tuesday that it sobered us going and silenced us on our return. Not one of us had a word as we left the Market; and the spontaneous outbursts of the thousands into 'Auld Lang Syne' almost broke us: one had to gulp hard. But, remarkable as all before and within the meeting had been, the sights and sounds outside by the Scott Memorial and all along Princes Street and the seven miles home, were such as to make one dumb. The beauty of the scene: Edinburgh in full moon; every window of the watch-tower-like houses alight; and every ledge, roof, and

street crowded with human beings, and all shouting, cheering, waving—it was to me like a great appeal. Just as nothing so touches and humbles one as the love and complete self-surrendering trust of a child, and so stirs up in one an earnest sense of service and battling for the child, if need be, so I felt with this throng. Always in a crowd I feel the appeal of its ignorance and helplessness more or less; and those words of Kingsley's—do you remember?—are true: 'The men, women, and children have in their faces a dumb cry,' or words to that effect. But never have I so felt all this as on Tuesday. And what does it really mean to them? It cannot be only the pleasure of an excitement, or, that the ninety-nine echo the feelings and sympathies of the intelligent hundredth, do you think? I fancy sometimes that the masses have an undefined hope that a deliverer is near from the trials and miseries, of which they have generally only a vague sense of discomfort, but occasionally are accentuated into too conscious agony. Well, I fancy that as most of them don't at all realize that a part of the cure is in their own hands, they feel that a deliverer and help is wanted; and so, when some great man or woman progresses (Queen or Premier, whoever it be), and the trumpets and chariots herald the coming, this poor world turns out into the bald daylight just as it is, and hails enthusiastically this advent from another world, this possible deliverer. But now to leave my fancies! The Saturday speech impressed me most: all judgment, sense, and criticism were disarmed, suspended, enthralled while 'the Golden-mouthed' spoke. Only in the grey morning when I awoke did I realize that he had slurred over Egypt, Transvaal, and spoken in words of positive thanksgiving over the state of Ireland! As I was leaving London a very well-informed Liberal Member of Parliament told me that fresh and worse mischief was brewing, and that Parnell was throwing dust in the eyes of Government, and yet the G.O.M. could speak as he did! I saw a great deal of him naturally, and never was I more struck by the fact that one idea possesses him. He is very much *interested* in Egypt, also Ireland! but heart, soul, body, and legs *absorbed* in the Franchise."

Nothing stirred Sophia's blood so pleasantly as the consciousness of standing on the pivot of events; consequently, she returned home from Scotland in a happy condition of sanguine enthusiasm. I could not wonder at the description which Mr Gladstone was reported to have given of her as "the most agreeable spinster in Society."

The advent of Willie's little daughter* (born on October 6, 1884) shone as a happy light in our family circle amid the gloom which darkened the last year of the existence of the Liberal Government. The country resented its conduct of the Egyptian and Soudanese wars. My father had taken a leading part in bringing the Cabinet to a sense of its responsibilities with regard to the relief of General Gordon, besieged by the Mahdi in Khartoum; but unhappily their fatal delay in sending the Expeditionary Relieving Force resulted in the fall of Khartoum and the death of General Gordon, justifying my father's worst fears. This national disaster, felt by him with bitter anguish, added its weight to the crushing grief with which at this time he noted the fatal progress of my mother's illness and its swift sapping of the remnant of her strength. He saw what none of us could fail to see, but he never spoke of it. It was a tacit assumption of my mother that my father did not realize her condition; it was her urgent desire that he should not realize it, because she knew how heavily he was feeling the strain of his public work and responsibilities; and, with exquisite sensibility, he acquiesced in her pathetic appearance of illusion.

"It nearly broke my heart," said Sophia to me, when after many weeks' inability to attend a service, my mother had felt well enough to venture out. "Father said, not knowing what hung over us, to Mother: 'It is a joy to have you by my side in Church again!'" This was the last occasion of her

* Mabel Laura Georgiana Palmer, married Viscount Howick, June 16, 1906. Now Countess Grey.

getting to a service. Of course he did really know.

Mary, with her tender gift of comforting, wrote to Sophia of her prayers for her to be given—

“Courage, health and strength and wisdom for your by no means easy path now. I think it is wonderful how you do get on, for I know it is difficult, but perhaps it is just because the work is so hard in many ways, that it is you who have it to do. I mean that as God has given you more power than many women, so He has sent you work that would be too much for most. Never, never think it a failure, darling. There is no such thing as failure when any one puts out all their strength, and gets that strength from God.”

Sophia's diary, kept during this autumn, was a tragic record of increasing anguish, deepening from uneasy suspicions to desperate certainty. Her last entry on November 5, 1884, was a cry of suffering :—

“I knew it was coming, I have had plenty of warning, and yet now it seems to have come in an awful rush! The floods seem to have overwhelmed me. I feel utterly stunned, O God!”

With an anguished heart she continued her unsleeping tender watch beside both her parents till the dreaded blow fell. My mother died in Easter week, on April 10, 1885; and on the 14th we laid her body to rest in Blackmoor Churchyard. It was an exquisite spring day, and the sense of the Easter triumph shone over us.

“No words can say,” wrote Sophia to some dear friends, “how deeply touched we have been by the pouring out from every class and kind, from the Queen to the humblest East London friends and Blackmoor labourers, of sympathy; and above all appreciations (not trite, but accurately expressed) of my Mother's love, sympathy and work—every line about her is a treasure—and the flowers from all parts, which made the grave and ground around a

garden for days and days. All this was a help and salve. . . . I had such a blessed life with Mother those last weeks, when she was so happy and free from suffering, and an unbroken companionship, such as one hardly can have often in life. I mean she had to be idle and I had to be free for her ; and she was feeling almost a new life in the sudden freedom from distress . . . and finally in a radiance of love, thanksgiving, and exquisite patience, in weariness and perfect peace, she gently went away from our sight. As she lay dead, the beauty and glory of her face were as if she had so immediately touched life and joy that its radiance bathed her raiment left behind."

Striking testimony to the sense of my mother's worth and nobility of character, came to us through all sorts and conditions of men, women, and newspapers.

"Hers was indeed a life to be thankful for," said Mrs Gladstone to Sophia, "with all the work for others and her 'brave spirit'; and you were allowed to see the reward. Death was robbed of its sting: she went away in smiles and peace."

The Dowager Lady Aberdeen, who had known and loved her for many years, spoke of her own personal gratitude for having been allowed to know of her wonderful example of heroism, self-abnegation, and love, which made it possible for her to do as she did and to work as she did. "Her countenance alone was a wonder when there was that internal suffering going on, she looked so serenely happy, with a happiness not of this world."

In our general suffering of loss, there was very special feeling among our friends for Sophia, and letters flowed in upon her full of very real sympathy.

Sir Arthur Gordon wrote to Sophia—

"There can be few who have you more constantly in their thoughts, or who feel more anxiety as to the effects of this blow which has thus shattered that happy and united home-life, which none who have

ever seen it can forget or think of without admiration and perhaps a touch of envy."

Mrs J. R. Green, recently left a widow by the death of the historian, the Rev. J. R. Green, wrote to Sophia—

"I could not tell how you, seeming to have no sorrow, had yet learned its meaning so differently from most others who came here. I said to you what I did not say to them—you caught meanings one does not know how to put in words. I wondered so much then. Now I see how it was. But surely you will like to know how the living with your own care has given you, whether you realize it or not, the entrance into that inner world of profounder experience, which so many people miss. . . . With all my heart I sympathize with you; and I know that suffering is not measured by the standard our friends set up and measure by, but by the awful dispensation of God in the heart of each of us."

"Yours affectionately,

"A. S. GREEN."

Sophia was vividly conscious of God's dealing with her in this deeper initiation into the purpose of death and the life beyond the grave. Her thoughts were centred on it, and her letters to her intimate friends at this period abounded with her deductions.

"That first month I was filled with such peace, such gladness for her and trust for Father. Heaven was close, and I felt as if I never again could mind anything; and then, when I had to go to work again, it all changed, and every day I realized more that I was left. Oh dear! sometimes one cries, 'How can God let one suffer so? If it even helped some one or did any good it would be different'—and then after those paroxysms, the '*Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani*' cry is almost *heard*, and: 'Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience'; and one does learn—very dully I do—but I want to learn."

"In Mother the beauty and glory of her face were an extraordinary help to me and took away my sore

feeling. . . . But, all said and done, the process is a jar *as it ought to be*, for it is life—not death—for which we are; and just as the coming from life into fuller life, which we call Birth, is an awful experience and in many points horrid and hideous, so is it with this entrance into Life which we call Death. I felt (just as you did) about her being alone, but only for a moment; then I was ashamed and told Him so, for He knows her ever so much better; and it is not only to God she went, but to the Incarnate God, the living Son of Man Who was there and has her."

"One can't yet talk easily about ordinary subjects with ordinary people; and *the* subject is impossible. What is said to one seems to belong to something else. It is all a different world and measure. Those words: 'Old things are passed away. All things have become new,' are what I feel. I don't think anything can really hurt one again; I don't mean that we shall not feel pain, disappointment, weariness; it's only it has all a different value and level. One seems to have *come through*. At first I only longed to die, now I want, if it is His will, to live, to bless others, if I can, with the blessedness of our home and to share the Revelation of the Father we have had and have. Father and Mother gave us, kept for us to keep, God and Heaven. Never once all these years have either of them been less than the Christians (not in the conventional use, but in the fullest: Christ's) we believed in. So for all this and the perfect love among ourselves, we must thank God."

"If it were not for the certainty of God's love and unerring, unerrable wisdom, one would go mad, I verily believe. The sorrows of this poor world are so pitiful; and then to think of His words: 'Is there any sorrow like unto My sorrow?' brings one down in a heap to His feet. But what a mercy that He is so tender, so different to men; and doesn't expect one to feel pain not pain, nor medicine not medicine."

"One wouldn't dare to pray so insistently for other people's lives but for the selfless wisdom of God's love (if one may use such a human simile), for I feel now, that one knows so little of what may be to be borne, and done in this world, that the more one

loves, the less one dares keep people back from the strength and peace and security beyond. Only if it's best for them to be left, one wants them so badly."

"The sense of temporary separation has been Father's chief help. Indeed I cannot understand how some people can feel their Dead dead. To me, it means impotency on my side (and that is where the great pain lies), that I cannot touch, see, feel, hear, but I feel them living as before, only with all they want. The gradual ceasing of the habit of anxiety of thinking for, trying to prevent (in the old meaning), has nevertheless left the habit of thinking what she would wish, of turning to her, as strong as ever; and so I have been surprised to find suddenly at times how the sense of freedom from this world's evils and fuller life and blessedness had already, without my apparent doing, become part of my Mother to me. It is difficult to express, but I never for one moment am without her, only sometimes one's longing to see and hear is agony."

"I think that as one gets older, the great realness of what is beyond gives the realness back into what is here, and hold on the realness of the life into which we are moving makes work and life and love here possible. I feel the best is to come; and a growing looking forward and strength and certainty such as that which in its fulness makes Father's wonderful life and hope, and I do not mind getting old if it brings this more; only I wish so, so much that I had done more for my people and God, one has done so miserably little. Nothing but Christianity could send one away from the grave with the words: 'Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'"

The resignation of Mr Gladstone's Ministry on June 9, 1885, was felt by my father as a welcome relief. He was gravely dissatisfied with the conduct of public affairs, and this anxiety, weighted by his own peculiar grief, crushed and exhausted him. He thankfully availed himself of his new freedom from the cares of office to go with Sophia to Italy, where

they spent the summer in Florence, Siena, Perugia, and Rome. It was at this time, when both their hearts were steeped in sacred memories, that my sister persuaded my father to begin the writing of his book of personal memorials, an occupation to which he felt strongly attracted. She wrote to me from Perugia, telling me how the work was progressing—

“He is in Magdalen College now! We have been living in Oxford, Winchester, Mixbury. His description of Winchester as a place, and the first impression made on him by the Cathedral, will enchant you. It is a lesson to keep letters from real friends—this; for I doubt if anything would have so fitted into his wants at this time (since April, I mean) as have these letters. Often he says to me: ‘It is as if one were with them again. I feel at home with them all.’ He is the most delightful companion possible (would you believe it?), and has been so much better than my fears. He has only had a mild agony once a week, and mildessimo once a week daily. Then his whistle-mouth comes on, and despair is written on his brow. His mild agonies remind me forcibly of you! They take the shape of being sure we are in the wrong train, or being sure there are no time-tables, and that we can *never!* know the train time, or being sure that we are in the wrong somehow; only, whereas your agonies make you think there is foul play somewhere, his have the peculiarly trying form of feeling he must somehow be guilty himself! or *I* must be! but as I said, to my huge surprise, sometimes days pass without agonies, and as I am willing to spend an hour in the sweet *salles d'attente* on a journey, he is never at all fussy, and so keen and fresh; and it's such a pleasure to have all the Poets and Hayden (for facts, not dates!) walking by one's side. He is a sort of diamond *Edition di Tutti*.

“There is a splendid Etruscan Museum here in Perugia, and we spent two mornings with vases, fibulæ, Samian ware, and all the barbarities and luxuries of the Ancients. The Gallery we have lived in; we have been into all the Churches and seen

the beautiful frescoes of the Sala del Cambio and St Severo, and walked every inch of the town and all the country, within three miles or so, outside. It is an enchanting place for walks: the mountains are so lovely, and then in the town there is so much variety, all the 'unimproved' parts are charming. One would like to spend months and months here. If one had only pleasure to think of I should like to go on like this; it's such a nice life with our reading and walks, and best of all from August 1 to September 17, I have talked to *nobody* but Father . . ." [She ended the letter at Rome.] "Rome is simply delightful. So fresh and bright, and cooler than Perugia. I wish we were stopping on. I wish I liked going back home instead of dreading it. I can't bear the thought of Blackmoor without Mother. And another horrid thing is, I haven't a bit of work left in me. I hope it is physical, for, if not, it is worse! I am enjoying greatly seeing pictures and all the picturesque things, and churches and reading and all that. But, alas! I have not any wish to go back to work and business, and I loathe the thought and wish I could go on holidaying: thoroughly demoralized, you see! I shall like it when I am in it, though."

The travellers returned to Blackmoor in the early autumn to find active preparations afoot for the approaching dissolution and General Election. The Radical programme-makers had given a prominent place on their platform to the Disestablishment of the Church; in consequence of which grave anxiety was felt by all our leading Liberal Churchmen as to the attitude which Mr Gladstone might take towards this demand of his extreme supporters. They at once resorted to my father for guidance in this crisis, and the wise and powerful lead which he was enabled to give them marks this particular period as the beginning of his great labours for the Defence of the Church. Of Sophia's share in that work I shall speak later.

Like my father, she also returned home to find new responsibilities awaiting her. A fortnight after

my mother's death she had been co-opted in her place on to the Committee of the Parochial Mission Women's Fund. My sister gladly continued this work which had always been so near my mother's heart; and, until Sophia's marriage in 1903, she remained one of its Lady Managers. During those seventeen years she was often ill, and in consequence her attendance at the Committees and her visits to the Mothers' Meetings in the poor districts in North and East London were very irregular; but, in spite of this unsatisfactory execution of her duties, her fitful work was endowed with real value by her unusual and inspiring personality. Occasionally she spoke at meetings on behalf of the work of the Association (using the knowledge thus acquired by her of the hardships and condition of the London labouring classes) in a way that deeply impressed those who heard her. One of her audience said that for "Humour, pathos, practical knowledge, common sense, and perfect delivery, her speech had never been excelled by any speaker he had ever heard."

Besides the two articles in *Macmillan's Magazine*, already mentioned, concerning special lines of work carried on in connection with the Parochial Mission Women, she wrote a third on the same subject for the *Quiver*. In it she described the Mission Women as—

"Women of the people, who themselves live by the life of Christ, and take it as their mission to declare this Life to their neighbours by words and ways they can understand. . . . The limitations, the very inadequacies of the Mission Woman's own education and capacities, are the history of the one point in which she stands possessed of a unique advantage in the helping of the poorest and the lowest. She really knows them and their ways, and does not know too much besides. She knows them as a matter of course, and they know her language as she knows theirs. She, like St Francis of Assisi, is *fitted* by the shortcomings in her education for

making known the Gospel to the poor, for first reaching them. She cannot but be simple; she has only a few words, but they are those used by the people, and so the thoughts they outline come straight home. She is no theologian or philosopher; she has not studied Blue-books, she knows nothing of Adam Smith, nor of theories as to Capital and Labour; but she knows what a strike means; what selfishness in employers and employed means; what hatred, envy, and spite are and *breed*; what drink often leads to; what carelessness as to the things of God results in. To her 'sin is Sin, the Devil the Devil, and Christ is Salvation.'

"There are three lessons experience gives as to helping others; and the more your neighbours differ from yourself in their circumstances and ways, the more need is there to study and follow these rules—

"I. You *must* know your neighbours' *tastes* as well as sorrows, sins and wants. There is as much difference among individuals and classes as there is among nations. One man's meat is another man's poison, and *vice versa*. This is true in every possible application.

"II. You *must* respect their liberty and rights. Be patient under rebuffs, and blame yourself for stupidity or want of tact; it is a safe presumption.

"III. You *must* keep your eye on Christ and the individual. Numbers stun and confuse. Keep your eye on Christ and a man—not millions. Take the food from Him and give it, and it will, though you may not see it, feed a multitude."

I have given this quotation from the article, because it expresses Sophia's theory of "Reasonable Service" to others. She always scrupulously kept her three rules, and to that obedience she owed the striking success which attended her personal ministrations. Her methods were Early Victorian. She imbibed all her views on human relationships, political economy, population and subsistence, and kindred subjects from my father; with the result that, while she herself belonged to a generation feverishly tortured by these problems, she lived in

the serener atmosphere of the previous generation before our present heat-wave had begun to affect it. I do not remember having ever known her attempt a serious study of any of the modern questions of Trades Union demands, minimum wages, protective legislation, etc. She showed a very limited interest in them, and regarded the prophets of the Christian Social Union with tacit distrust. In the letter to Sir Arthur Gordon of January 13, 1884, already given, she frankly avowed her disbelief in "this idiotic movement" of Socialism. Two years later she wrote in a time of riots from great distress from slack trade—

"I have been a good deal in Bethnal Green, Hackney, Homerton, Clerkenwell, Whitechapel. Everywhere the working people are very sore at the riots and the roughs who posed as 'unemployed.' In Homerton and Hackney they say the distress is only the ordinary fag-end of the winter distress; but in Bethnal Green and Clerkenwell it is, that every year for the last ten years, each has been more lean than the preceding, and as this winter more works are being closed than ever, the distress has reached an awful point. In some parts, all round the Docks, for example, the trade has gone down the river, but the people will not follow; and more and more country people stream up to London and the congestion gets daily worse. And Arch says the landlords drive the poor labourers to London! and Mr Chamberlain now actually echoes Hyndman and Co. in telling the people not to emigrate, not to be forced from their homes: better times are coming. Well it *is* a Problem."

She acknowledged the problem, but distrusted modern attempt to solve it as fraught with explosive danger. To the end of her life she appeared to confound social reform with socialism; socialism with syndicalism and anarchism; and to suspect all alike of being polluted by atheism.

Happily our nineteenth-century social reformers

are not the only builders of the New Jerusalem, nor is their road thither the sole one provided for compassionate souls to travel on. None of them has borne more appealing witness to the need of a truer brotherhood of men than has their sceptical critic, Sophia. Her belief that the call to share this brotherhood comes from God, and the eagerness with which her heart vibrated in response, are shown in many of her writings. I give the following extract as an example :—

“ Every day there arise cries from the great City (of London) which reach very far ; but sometimes not far enough ; or, in transmission become inarticulate, only leaving the impression that somewhere some one is in distress, some one whom we would help if we could, if we only knew from whom the cry came.

“ And in those instances where the cry is only too articulate, a call of crime and wrong and death, have you not felt a sharp bitter pang shoot through you as you thought of what might have been, of the time when a little patient help and sympathy might have made all the difference in the life which, as you lay down the newspaper, you know has reached its goal of shame and death ?

“ It is one of the most sorrowful mysteries in this strange world why this should be so ; but what I would now urge is, that this being so, no one should neglect any opportunity of that sympathy which is often salvation to us men and women. You know you can give it if you will, first in actual words, and then in the sympathy of service, of money, of prayer. And all this is needed.

“ If one throws oneself into but one part of a life, it opens upon one such a vista of sorrow, life beyond life in a very seething mass of pain and wrong, that, half-dazed and crushed, one would in despair shut one's eyes, close one's ears, turn round and go back if one could.

“ To stand by is impossible ; but go on, join the procession, you will find an order, which from a distance you could not see. It is not merely a miserable confused mob, it is a procession moving

on up the Altar Steps of God ; and into it thousands are pressing, finding, as they do so, a strange power and consolation. And as you march along with them, a member and necessarily, in some degree, a sufferer, you will to your surprise recognize words in what before was only a distant cry, and indescribable harmony in what is yet but a discord. Slowly you will grasp, as a little child spells out a word, that the chant of the procession is: 'God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.'

"But if we would hear this ourselves, we must work. We must draw, gather the millions of the wrong-bearing and wrong-doing into the procession ; and perhaps in no other way can we join it ourselves."*

In addition to the filial duty of gathering up the threads of our mother's work for the Parochial Mission Women's Fund, Sophia received an appeal from her brother to help him as an election canvasser in the autumn of 1885. He had been invited by the Liberal electors of the Petersfield Division of Hampshire to stand as their Parliamentary candidate. Although he stood as an uncompromising opponent of the disestablishment or disendowment of the Church, and as an advocate of firm rule in Ireland, the opposition to his candidature was bitter ; and local conditions and unreasoning prejudices made his fight a very difficult one.

He needed strenuous help in his canvassing, and Sophia's zeal and eloquence were of inestimable value to him. The elections, which returned the Liberal party to power, made my brother member for Petersfield by a majority of 161 over his opponents.

Sophia was extremely indignant with the false statements spun around the disestablishment demands ; and after the election she poured forth her soul in the following frank letter :—

* From the preface to her article on the Mission to Laundresses in Notting Hill, called "Soapsuds," in *Macmillan's Magazine*, January, 1881.

Sophia to The Hon. Sir Arthur Gordon.

“Blackmoor,

“December 17, 1885.

“It is really rather trying to hear the Gladstones and Roseberrys and many others say that Disestablishment was purely a party cry got up for electioneering purposes by the Tory party. Granted it was an excellent card, and that Lord Salisbury was delighted at the chance, it still remains that 480 men, candidates, were pledged quietly by the Schnadhorst League to Disestablishment, and that, until after Lord Salisbury had roused public attention to the fact, no one heard of even so much as a promise of a respite for this Parliament. Mr Gladstone ignored the subject in his manifesto. My Father was, as I told you, asked repeatedly: ‘What do you think? Surely you have an opinion? Mr Gladstone gives none. Lord Hartington none, etc., etc., but you have an opinion. What is it?’ Then, feeling so strongly as he did, and believing that the question was one of ‘practical politics,’ he felt bound to speak. Do you blame him? G.O.M. is most kind! but I hear they are all very sore and think Father’s line most uncalled for.

“Willie looks fagged, so much older and careworn. I feel it is the last rope cut now, his old boyish face is gone. One ought not to mind too much, I suppose, since only idiots can stand still, and that there is all the growing old before final life can come; but I wish one could keep care and sadness from people who used to be young. It’s cowardly and I know it, but somehow seeing the difference in Freda and Willie since April, 1885, cuts me almost more than anything now. . . . Willie has been good, and really the behaviour of the ‘uppers’ has been at best as unintelligent as that of the labourers was supposed to be; if he had been Bradlaugh and Labouchere in one, there could not have been more zeal in keeping him out of places; so he spoke sixty-six nights, as often as not, from dunghills, pigstyes, barns, carts on the open in lieu of decent rooms. Every one says now that they are so glad Willie is in, though they *had* to oppose him! He really was a saint. He

never lost his temper or gave them what they deserved, but truly, as my Father said, they did their best to make him the extreme Radical they describe him!"

The Hon. Sir Arthur Gordon to Sophia.

"15. 3. 86.

"Queen's Cottage, Nuwara Eliya, Ceylon.

"When one gets letters so intensely interesting as yours are, in every line and word, it becomes very difficult to send any reply. There is nothing on this side of any equivalent value to write about. And one feels that merely to say, thank you, THANK YOU, THANK YOU, in different degrees of earnestness is somewhat monotonous, though really the only very obvious thing to do. I have never felt so seriously anxious, or apprehensive, about public affairs as I do now. The terrible facility with which an unconvinced majority yields to an earnest and violent minority has, as you know, always been a great source of uneasiness to me, but I was hardly prepared for the tame surrender of the Whig leaders or for the 'Well, after all' sort of acquiescence in revolution, which seems to be coming over the country. The telegrams tell us, by the way, that the Church in Wales has escaped from disestablishment by twelve votes only; and that Harcourt, who was one of these twelve, expressed full sympathy with the motion, but said it must be taken along with the question of English disestablishment! You, none of you, know what it means—neither those who deprecate it, nor those who regard it with complacency. When I was in England the other day I had some talk with the Bishop of Lichfield* about it, and was, I think, more disheartened by his weak and *ignorant* optimism than by any amount of gloomy predictions. He was facing, with a light heart, a disestablishment of his own fancy, not in the least resembling the facts he will have to face when he finds himself an office bearer of a voluntary society. Your clergy have time to speak to their flocks on

* Bishop Maclagan.

spiritual topics mainly. Here, and in most poor voluntary Churches, hardly a Sunday passes that sheer necessity does not compel the parson to devote great part of his exhortation to sturdy begging. This is, I admit, necessary ; but it has many objections. In the first place the diminished amount of doctrinal or practical teaching is a distinct loss ; the frequency of appeals for money irritates the ordinary church-goer ; and I am inclined to think that to have their attention so constantly concentrated on the question of ways and means is very bad for the clergy themselves. It is painful to see how many of the qualities one has been accustomed to associate with the lower order of R.C. priests and dissenting ministers—bad taste, vulgarity, love of tawdry show, importunity for money, etc., characterize the clergy of our disestablished Churches abroad. I fear they will not be wanting in our disestablished Church at home."

The sudden conversion of Mr Gladstone to the cause of Home Rule, the consequent disruption of the Liberal party, the rejection by the House of Commons of his Government of Ireland Bill on June 8, 1886, and the resignation of his third administration, threw the country again into the throes of a General Election ; and again, for the second time in half a year, Sophia laboured at the repugnant work of canvassing with all her sisterly vehement devotion. Her letters to Ceylon marked the feverish condition of politics during the first half of that eventful year.

Sophia to The Hon. Sir Arthur Gordon.

"April 6, 1886.

"I really think one can't stand much more ! and yet it is only as one suffers and grows old that one begins to possess ; and the patience which comes from experience does graft one into the real life and all that one looks for and is sure will be in the world to come. I do like those words :—

" 'O Life, not Death, for which we pant,
More Life and fuller, that we want.'

"The results of my reading all bearing on the English Church question is, that the historical facts are so patent in contradiction to all that Disestablishers assert, that to write for the Church is useless! it is only *précher les convertis*, the other side won't read, or if they do, it will be—

"A man convinced against his will
Is of the same opinion still."

As our dear old nurse used to say: 'It's not the eyes, my dear, it's the will!' when I excused my childish bad hemming by 'I can't see.'

"And as to the English Constitution (my other reading), poor old thing! it's out of fashion and also everything declared by historians, philosophers, essayists—all the gathered wisdom of the Past—is negatived by the wisdom of the Present. It seems to me we all lost a great deal of time when we learnt the ten commandments and to rejoice in the Magna Charta and ached our heads over Adam Smith, Fawcett, and even J. S. Mill! It is all disproven, and we have to unlearn and learn anew. It is indeed a Dispensation!"

"April 23, 1886.

"A general demoralization seems going on. One honest man after another fails! and those whom one thought honest, strong and sensible, have behaved in such a manner as to leave us no choice but to think them weak fools or downright knaves! It is such men as S. W—— and C. R—— honest, thorough English gentlemen who turn the wavering more than anything; and it is very sad to hear so many M.P.s (both sides) say: 'Well, it is practically hopeless now! Whatever happens, things can never be the same again; and if the Irish don't get it this time, there will be fearful outrage and no peace until they do!' I feel indignant: What has the future to do with us? Is there no God for the Future if we do our duty in the Present? My Father is writing an admirable letter to the *Times* on Home Rule, and another on the Land Bill is to follow."

She described her canvassing thus—

"On June 21, we began canvassing at 8 a.m. I

drove off eight miles to receive instructions, and got under weigh by eleven. From that day till July 14 (Sundays only excepted) we were literally out from morning to night. I always came home to sleep until July 7, when Father went to London, and those four nights he was away I slept at diverse centres in the neighbourhood of Portsmouth. I just kept above water as regards *absolutely* necessary business, but all else had to take its fate. When July 15 came, I was so tired out I could not walk quickly. I, detest canvassing, and though we all have come out of it as white as we went in as regards scrupulousness! yet I wish it were forbidden. There is something most distasteful in calling on strangers for something, and particularly on people whom otherwise you would never call on! Of course one honestly thinks the 'something' is for the electors' good, but still the feeling remains. I must say the people were very civil and kind, and everywhere we made friends. I learnt a great deal about distant districts which was useful, saw a variety of clergy, heard of a variety of squires, and was much struck by two wretched villages as contrasts to the generality of happy well-to-do cottages, gardens, homes. Of course in brilliant summer weather, hay sweet-smelling in the fields, and roses and honeysuckles over the thatch and eaves of the cottages; larkspurs and sweet-williams blazing in the gardens, and glorious lilies sentinelling the paths, every village looks its best. Cotton dresses look ideal, and smoky chimneys and draughty windows are miseries out of count. But, allowing for the extra favourable circumstances, the impression on me was strong, that our labourers are a very well-to-do set. The only thing which is *very* unsatisfactory is, that with utmost industry and perfect sobriety, there is no end but the workhouse, unless one or more of the children do not marry and are free to keep the parents—or unless one or more of the children so better themselves that they can afford to keep the old folk."

The elections took place on July 13, and Willie was returned as Liberal Unionist Member for Petersfield by a majority of 111. We had not dared to hope

for this triumph, and our spirits had fallen to zero the night before the declaration of the poll. As our party drove into Petersfield to hear the result, Sophia said to my father: "Now if we are beaten, we must not look sulky. Father! will you promise to look cheerful?" He answered: "My dear child, the most I can hope for is to look *resigned*." As the carriage entered the market-place, Maud drove by, "her face a sight of wild joy," and she shouted the glorious news, which for the moment made my father break down, overwhelmed with joy and thankfulness.

"I hope," wrote Sir Arthur Gordon in his congratulations, "that Wolmer attributes to you the success of his election. I am sure he ought to do so. It stands to reason. You are, I am sure, a most successful canvasser. You worked hard and you secured for him, we will say as a maximum, fifty votes. But if fifty who voted for him had voted against him, where would his majority have been? Q.E.D."

My father's keen apprehension of the disastrous consequences which would ensue to the Empire, were Home Rule to be conceded to the Irish demands; and to the Nation, were the Liberationists proposals for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church to be carried in Parliament, made him untiring in his exertions on behalf of the Unionist cause and of Church Defence. He devoted the remainder of his life to this work, although the supremely valuable services thus rendered by him subjected him to an alarming strain of fatigue. His learned researches carried on in the British Museum, the Vatican, and other famous libraries, his heavy literary work, his speeches in the House of Lords, in the House of Laymen in the Canterbury Convocation, his frequent journeys to conferences and meetings in London, Wales, Scotland, and provincial towns such as Birmingham, Bristol, Huddersfield, Derby, Oxford,

Nottingham and other important places, with addresses delivered in every kind of draughty, exhausting, huge building, would have proved physically impossible to him at his age (between seventy-five and eighty-three) had not my sister watched over him with the tender vigilance of a guardian angel. She was his never-failing companion on these fatiguing occasions as well as in his quiet life at Blackmoor.

Her devotion to her father was an absorbing passion. All her time was really dedicated to him. In London, when she could not be with him, she accomplished a good deal of social intercourse, sandwiching in visits to her friends and to the Mission Women's Meetings, between his calls on her time; but she always sacrificed any plans she might have formed to go with him, when she could not persuade him to go with her. His comfort, health, interests, anxieties, were her constant thought.

Mr J. Henry Shorthouse described this filial devotion as a

"Ministry which entered into Lord Selborne's family life, which sustained and befriended, which consoled in hours of depression and of toil, which seconded and assisted in social and intellectual life, the ministry, I had almost written of angels, but I content myself with writing 'the ministry of women.'"^{*}

Sir Herbert Warren † spoke of what many other friends remembered with tender admiration, when he wrote thus of my sister to me after her death—

"How well I remember my first meeting her as a girl with your father at Mr Jowett's, and how strong was the impression she made of equal intellect, grace,

* From the "In Memoriam" sketch by Mr J. H. Shorthouse, author of "John Inglesant," in the *Guardian* of May 15, 1895.

† President of Magdalen College, Oxford.

and goodness. Later, she often came here to this house with your father. Her devotion to him, her adequacy to be his daughter and companion were beautiful. I shall never forget her or feel otherwise than grateful that the light of her personality fell across my path."

CHAPTER VI

1886—1892

(AGE : THIRTY-FOUR TO FORTY)

IN these out-of-office days, Blackmoor became my father's and Sophia's permanent dwelling-place, and every year their sojourn in London grew shorter. As head of the household, my sister often felt overburdened and strained by her responsibilities. Although she lavished infinite pains upon them, she was not altogether successful in her grapplings with the problems of domestic science. She combined a rare sense of consideration for her servants with an endeavour after unattainable perfection ; and her want of a sense of proportion caused her to fret as tragically over trifling failures as over grave faults. She found it very difficult to school herself into tolerating inevitable shortcomings with the enviable calm exhibited by short-sighted or philosophical housekeepers ; and, as a result, these irritating worries strained her nerves to a deplorable degree. Her theories of domestic government were admirable. The difficulty lay in their conversion into practice. She had evolved them in her early girlhood, and had propounded them to her mother a dozen years before in a characteristic letter pleading that an exceptionally long holiday should be granted to the house-keeper. She conceded that it was very difficult to leave the bevy of young maids without her.

“ But I think,” she wrote, “ that trust and responsibility is a valuable thing, and if you will trust the

maids, put them on their honour to do their duty, and so enable Mrs Carter to have this holiday, I am sure they will not disappoint you, and that they will all work gladly and willingly. Do, darling, trust the brood of ducklings. They do sometimes make one doubt if they are goslings instead of ducklings, but really, at the bottom, I think they are ducklings and may be trusted to swim, and I think the trusting would work well. So do pray and leave them in God's hands and on their honour. Do, do say a full hearty 'yes!' and you will never repent it. I feel inspired, so forgive my 'teaching my grandmother,' dear. I think if they are always looked after, they won't look after themselves; and being responsible is good for people sometimes. Don't think I don't sympathize with your anxiety, for my fault is to long to tie people to my apron, but I feel intensely about Mrs Carter; and when things are not one's own fault I think God will take care for one. I think she needs the holiday for her soul's sake too."

When Sophia had borne the responsibility of ruling her father's house for many years, she wrote the following summary of her experiences for the benefit of a girl friend about to shoulder the same burden:—

"I was pressed down and worried beyond measure in 1885. I was very unhappy, of course, and everything seemed snapped off when Mother died and I was worn out with caring for her; and so I was not in a healthy state of mind or body, and it was bad for me. It was only gradually that I came to see that God's service is as much in fair expenditure on the comforts, even luxuries, of a home-life, which are not for oneself only, but for the others and younger ones, as in what seems so much more worth it, and what certainly is much more satisfying to oneself. Sometimes when I knew Father had refused appeals he wished to give to, I felt sore at carelessness about waste in lots of small ways and I said things often I had better not. Now I am able, after long trying, not to and to be glad to have things the others

like because it helps to make Home. Perhaps I was like *Corban*, though I did not mean to be."

It was not merely the cares of government which aged my sister in these years, but also the microbes of fatigue and depression, hatched out of the poison of recurrent attacks of influenza, which then began to haunt her much too closely. In one of her diaries, labelled "Grins and Groans" (all her diaries had their titles), she describes them as "Blue-devils which made her feel like a dull dead dog." Happily the grins alternated with the groans, and banished the blue-devils whenever she was feeling well and interested. It was her temperament to be in extremes: very happy or very unhappy, the unavoidable condition of a nature which possessed such acute sense of the values of life.

Sophia shrank with her acute sensibility from the inevitable return to ordinary life after my mother's death. The first country house visit paid by her and my father was to a sympathetic hostess, Mrs Meynell Ingram, at Hoar Cross, in September, 1886, but—

"Despite all that is good, interesting, and really delightful in our week here," wrote Sophia, "going back to the old routine of outside life is difficult; and what seemed natural and to gain or possess a *raison d'être* from uninterrupted home sunshine, comes unnaturally now. One's own inner home, work, duties are perhaps stronger and even easier for great sorrow and experience; but for the flimflams of life, for the marionettes and Punches and Judies one needs be young, and youth is less a matter of so many actual years less or more, than of what has happened, what one has gone through. However, as one must be where one is, it's perhaps a good thing over, this re-stepping into the outside life, but the glamour of it is gone. I enjoy very much indeed, thank God, everything, but you know what I mean."

This was true. Her power of enjoyment ranged over landscape and sky, over buildings and gardens,

over associations and people, past and present. Her pen sketches were often records of impressions, vivid with colour and movement. Here are a few of them—

“This house * is roomy, comfortable, up and down, with a drawing-room opening into the garden, a long narrow room, full of china and worked chairs of different ages, leading up into a black oak-panelled library, another long room. There is a gentle age about it all, and one feels as if some of Miss Thackeray’s poor little love-sick girls must have lived here and made their preserves and washed their laces and pulled rose-leaves for pot-pourri. The trees here are magnificent, and it is quite the land of elms. Yesterday I settled in my mind that a really fine elm is like a noble, strong, tender woman.

“Rudhall is another place like a story-book. It is near here, very lovely, among trees, an old Henry VIIIth house, utterly unlike any house I ever saw, and very, very ghosty. In it lives a Miss Mortimer, with Brittany servants in costume, Brittany pigs, cows, horses and fowls, and English dogs. She lives quite alone in the old rambling house. From four years old she had lived in Brittany with her adopted mother. Then, after twenty years there, they chartered a schooner and brought everything over to Rudhall.”

“Have you ever felt worried by figures in a landscape painting? I have, except in that ‘Angelus’ of Millet, all other landscapes I care for, are, if figureless, soothing and friendly; if with people stuck in, the charm to me is gone.”

“The skies here are beautiful these November days: the picture of peace. Gentle strata, following the lie of the land, of pale blue, gold and deep grey clouds, with sunshine everywhere kissing the leaves in their dying glory.”

“Such a lovely All Saints’ Day. The tints this year are glorious in their radiance. It is a glory of dying, so beautiful that the summer beauty pales before it.”

“The absolute joy of sunshine here † never seemed

* Overross, in Herefordshire.

† Tedsmore Hall, in Shropshire.

so great before, which may be the gain of seven months' winter. Oh, the hills! They are glorious, line beyond line of blue, purple, shadowful ramparts with here and there a break in the gentleness of the outline where a stronger spirited hill has risen above its brethren and, struggling to be a great mountain, has almost attained and resulted in some very individual peak or great broken shoulder. Hills must be the things most eternal-like here, for they irresistibly draw one into a more vivid feeling of God's Presence. I felt as if I must sing! (poor me!) last night; and this morning I could not stay in bed: the hills drew me out. Last night I thought: 'They could never be in more perfect light than now.' This morning I feel: 'This is their light!'"

The occasional country house visits which she paid with my father were opportunities of real refreshment to my sister. In every house that she entered, between endless conversations and walks with the elders, and story-telling and romps with the children of the house, she continued to write stacks of letters, and to read shelf-fuls of books. She gradually accumulated a small library in her bedroom, and sucked wisdom from the brains and volumes around her with the diligence of a human bee.

It is needless to say, that, despite the extra fatigue involved in hospitality, Sophia also greatly enjoyed welcoming the quiet stream of intimate friends which flowed constantly through the portals of Blackmoor and Portland Place. While she lavished profuse efforts on the comfort and carefully remembered preferences of each friend, she was tenacious of her authority as hostess. She resented arrangements being made or flowers being picked, without her sanction. She combined the qualities of the generous charming hostess with those of the benevolent determined autocrat. This latter characteristic never appeared more markedly than when accidental discussions arose on certain subjects, such as habits and customs, socialism, political theories, theology, on

which her opinions were rigidly fixed. We found ourselves in the position of perverse heretics if we differed from her in these arguments. She was as unable as Torquemada to listen calmly to our folly, and she overwhelmed us with torrents of indignant remonstrances.

During the elections of 1886, Sophia had declared that "Mr Gladstone had Bulled himself Infallible, and that inasmuch as he was unaware of it, the position was far more dangerous than that of His Holiness." In absolute unconsciousness she had followed his example; but happily her infallibility extended over a more limited range of subjects. On questions outside these particular matters, she enjoyed talks and arguments with all the charm of her keen interest and thirst for knowledge.

I have already given examples of the notes which my sister used to keep of her talks with sympathetic political and literary friends; and side by side with sayings of the Duke of Argyll, Mr Tennyson, Miss Octavia Hill, Mr Browning, Lady Salisbury, and other interesting talkers, she wrote down racy and pathetic stories, pithy sayings and colloquialisms in Hampshire dialect, which she heard in her visits to the Blackmoor cottages. She would wax very angry at the greed of collectors who prowled round our primitive Hampshire villages and drove cheating bargains with the poor people over old bits of china or furniture; she loved to see these good possessions beautifying parlours and kitchens; but on words, local, obsolete, rare, which she heard in her cottage talks, she would pounce with the zest of a treasure-seeker, and display her newly acquired possession at home triumphantly.

"I can't read with them glasses: it's all scrimcam scrancum!" delighted her.

"Did the storm hurt the hops much?" she asked one autumn day. "Oh dearie me! I'd just think it did. It terrified the vines and abused the bines shameful!"

This from a working man, possessor of a very bad temper; a standard remark after every disaster, public or private:—

“For my part, nothing surprises me; nor should, seeing as we’ve bin prepared for the end of the world; not but what I should be thankful to be spared it in my time. I like to be where I know what’s what; and the end of the world would be an upset and no mistake! and I not yet accustomed to Heaven, as I may say. . . . Yes, I was born with a temper there’s no denying; and that being so, I don’t waste my breath nor spirits in trying to keep it in.”

“Jim, he were always kittle (weak), and she were natty and genteel, and so it comed about: and there’s a life spoilt!” grieved a candid mother over her son’s marriage.

One day Sophia went to call on an old woman who had been childish for years. She found her as usual sitting in the chimney corner silent, but jealously watching every movement of her aged husband lest he should go out. She could not bear him out of her sight; and he, with tender pity, made himself a prisoner within doors for her sake.

Sophia asked him: “Do you not sometimes find it very trying never getting out and about after being used to it all your life?”

He answered: “Well, yes, maybe; but I look at it this way. Maybe we, Missus and I, been took up with our work and no time for the Almighty. Anyway, we did no make it. And maybe the Lord have took she into a corner like, to get better acquainted with He afore she goes nigher He; and maybe but for she, I’d not ha’ thought about it; and I be looking after she, and she be looking after He, and the both of us be stopped to get acquainted afore we go yonder.”

Sophia’s appreciation of quaint and majestic language and of forcible descriptive terms, made her keen to infect other minds with her enthusiasms. In

the summer of 1886 she gathered together at Blackmoor an unusual group of Shakespeare students. She shall describe the experiment in her own words—

“There were sixteen in all: farmer’s and tradesmen’s daughters and school-mistresses and three ladies, friends of mine; their refinement of reading and accent being excellent tuition. It has succeeded beyond my hopes! It has made the damsels ask me for histories and not only story-books; and the school teachers say it makes them feel a new life for teaching. I thought of them first in the plan. We expect them to teach well, and then the poor things are without any intellectual atmosphere. We meet Saturdays, 2.30 to 6.30, having a break for tea and discussion. May, June, July, August, and September. Some read with an astonishing intelligence and vigour, and it has given a new world of interest in words, tradition and character. We read ‘As you like it’ four times through, ‘The Merchant of Venice’ three times, and then went on to the Historicals by Father’s wish. ‘John’ and ‘Richard’ are over, and Saturday we attack ‘Henry IV., Part I.’ From the farmeresses I have learnt some capital proverbs and country sayings; and often words I thought of as obsolete they tell me are used in some way or other still.”

At the end of 1886, my father published the first of his two learned books in defence of the Church against her assailants. It was named: “A Defence of the Church of England against Disestablishment, with an Introductory Letter to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P.” It ran through several reprints and into a cheap edition in the space of a few months.

Sophia described its reception in the following letter, written when it had been published about a month:—

Sophia to The Hon. Sir Arthur Gordon.

“Mr Gladstone has written to father about his book in a most friendly spirit, but so Gladstonianish! saying that Ireland must keep the field and that

English Church Disestablishment would never be a practical question in his time, and that Wales is independent altogether and, no doubt, will have to be considered this session. Canon Liddon is delighted with the book. He and Lord Blachford have written the most thoughtful criticism on it. Its sale has been large and, clearly, its reception is very warm. Most of the Reviews are favourable; but, after all, its work is to set forth a clear defence and that is done. The dear old Chief (for such in one's affection he will always be) was not at all hurt by the introductory letter, and only smiles gently at Father's lawyer-like tiresome definiteness and precision of mind, dismissing himself all that is unpleasant and inconvenient as 'not within the range of practical politics.'

This book was followed in 1888, by a critical and historical work on "Ancient Facts and Fictions concerning Churches and Tithes." Between these two years, Sophia launched a little volume of Stories on her own account.* She dedicated the book to my father, describing it as the story of "lives lived out of sight and lost in the crowd, lives which of themselves never or rarely find expression, but which have often something worth being searched for and made known." She had the pleasure of knowing that Mr Richard Holt Hutton, the weighty editor and formidable critic of the *Spectator*, considered the book to possess real merit and originality. The occasion of its birth was due to a period of compulsory idleness during the winter of 1887, when Sophia was seriously ill from influenza and two attacks of pleurisy. This illness had resulted from a chill contracted by her on January 15, a date always thankfully remembered by her as that of her third deliverance from violent death. The social obligations of attending a ball at Alton, one of the principal towns in my brother's constituency, had involved her taking a large house party to the dance in weather of such

* "Mrs. Penicott's Lodger and other Stories." (Macmillan.)

arctic severity that the roads had become tracks of frozen snow and ice. The return journey home at two in the morning took them down an exceedingly steep hill, then resembling an Alpine slope rather than the familiar Hampshire hanger. While they were still on the level road, the horses shied against a great mass of snow and pitched the coachman off his seat into the hedge. Nobody else was on the box; and the horses, with the reins dangling on their backs, set off at a dangerous pace which got faster and faster as they approached the brow of the hill. Sophia alone knew when the fatal moment of their reaching the precipitous point had come. She told us afterwards how, with piercing anguish, she thought of the agony of sorrow awaiting us all and the parents of the young girls and men of the party. "All this shot into my mind, and then I felt only as I did at Petra: God very near and a great calm, and our whole beings went in prayer." She then said to her scared silent companions: "We are going down the hill. We must keep more still than ever and just pray." Suddenly, as if an angel stood and turned them, the horses stopped a second, and then dashed off through an open gate up a private drive which branched off from the high-road, halfway down the hill. It led to a house where they hardly ever visited. The horses went quietly up the drive and stopped before the unfamiliar door, to the astonishment of the owner, who was woken out of his sleep by his nocturnal visitors.

As Sophia seemed unable to recover her strength after her illness, her doctor prescribed change of air abroad; and, nothing loth, she and my father went to Italy in the blossoming beauty of May. They took their "dreamful ease" in Bellagio, on Monte Generoso and at Piora amid enchanting slopes of Alpine flowers, celebrating Queen Victoria's first Jubilee under the flaunting banners of the orange lilies, columbines, asphodels and wild peonies, which

transformed the hay-meadows of Monte Generoso into terraces of regal glory. They returned home in time for my father to take part, on July 19, in the debate in the House of Lords on the second reading of the Irish Crimes Bill. The Duke of Argyll filled Sophia's heart with pride when he told her that my father's speech was "the finest and most crushing piece of argument which had been throughout the whole Irish Home Rule campaign."

Among Sophia's recorded dialogues is one which belongs to this period. Her characteristic preface to it states that she held it with a Gladstonian Member of Parliament, S. R.

" who had always seemed sound in conscience, judgment, and an excellent man. I copy what passed between us, under-coloured carefully because of the Ninth Commandment, and written down immediately after he left.

" S. R. 'So your father is away. I wish he did not condemn his old friends and us other Liberals so much in this Plan of Campaign. We are not responsible actually; and after all, there can be no question: it is useless to quarrel with the tools and workmen because they may not be exactly what you would prefer(!) and approve. And, mind you, because the Plan of Campaign, for instance, has not been denounced, as your father demanded, you do not know that Mr Gladstone and others of us did not use our utmost legitimate influence to stop it. But when that was found impossible, we were not in any way bound to do more. It is all part of the war. It's useless to be squeamish about means. Politics are a very rough business, and, after all, when you remember Cavour, Cromwell, and hundreds of other cases in the world's history when great work had to be done, you will acknowledge that all the means were not what one would prefer. Anyhow, we are on the brink of a revolution, forced to our position by the Government and Liberal Unionists, and on them is the responsibility. Mr Gladstone, in my opinion, and I know in that of all the Gladstonian party, has taken all along the only possible and right course. You may call it

obstruction, but his conduct in the House was only a despairing attempt to save the liberty of the country and of Ireland and of Parliament ; and you will see that the honest instinct of the people all through the country is on our side. Depend upon it liberty and justice are at stake, and for this and Ireland no means must be unused. We all work for the same cause ; and much as we might prefer that the strongest measures should be avoided, it may not be possible. As I said, politics are a very rough game. If you were in it you would judge as I do.—I furiously denied this, and asked : ' In short, the end justifies the means ? '—He hemmed, fidgeted, and then said : ' Well, I should not put it so. Necessity.'—I said : ' Then practically you dismiss the ordinary principles of right and wrong from politics ? '—' No, I don't dismiss them, but they are impossible in detail. The great issues are, of course, entirely a matter of right and wrong.'—Did you ever hear such a miserable casuistry and confession ? "

In the autumn my father and Sophia visited South Wales and Birmingham to take part in Church Defence Meetings. At Birmingham they were the guests of Mr Shorthouse ; and while there, Sophia had the deep interest of meeting Cardinal Newman for the second time in her life. He had been a dear friend of my uncle, the Rev. William Palmer, who had also joined the Roman Communion. I give her account of her two interviews with him in her own words. The first occasion was in 1878, when she and my father and mother were attending the Birmingham Musical Festival.

" The *Elijah* was most wonderful. . . . Suddenly, when absorbed in ' O rest in the Lord ! ' Father touched me, and I saw quite near us in profile, Cardinal Newman, his whole soul in his face. ' I alone ' was the first impression ; and then, gradually, the shadow and isolation and even pain passed, and his face was alight with radiance and an infinite peace. When later, father took me to introduce me, Cardinal Newman seemed still in the other world, and as he

held my hands and looked at me, it seemed as if blessings of peace entered me from his eyes."

Then on October 27, 1887, she wrote—

"Father and I went to the Oratory to see the Cardinal. He was unwell, but had sent to say he wished to see Father (who had hesitated on account of the Cardinal being ill), and on hearing I was with Father desired I should come too. We spent an hour with him, and he blessed us. There was a print of a bird's-eye view of Oxford on the wall; and he took me to look at it and said, leaning on his staff: 'Alma Mater, Alma Mater!' then patting me on the arm: 'I shall never see her again. How dear she is to me!' and his eyes were full of tears. I listened as he and Father spoke of the past; and the array of names brought up the men, and the only time he showed anything but tenderness was in reference to Mr Gladstone. He burst forth into regrets, and his voice took a very stern note of condemnation; and then to my amusement, I confess, he added: 'But it suits the Archbishop of Westminster!' [Cardinal Manning]. When we said good-bye, he drew Father to him and kissed him. Father was much touched. He spoke of his death as being very near, and indeed he looks so frail as if one more breath of illness would sweep his soul free."*

Unexhausted by his campaign against the Liberationist heresy, my father undertook at the beginning of the winter a most successful and strenuous crusade against the Irish heresy. This was only cut short by his and Sophia's departure for Rome at the end of December. They arrived there in time for Christmas, and spent a most enjoyable two months in the city which my father used to designate as "most interesting as above all other cities, the Monument, and almost the Epitome, of the history of the World, ancient and modern, civil and ecclesiastical." Throughout their sojourn there, despite the intensity of their interest

* Cardinal Newman's death took place three years after this interview.

in the recent discoveries of excavators, and in the glories of the Vatican, Churches, Art Galleries, Palaces and Gardens, the spectre of Home Rule continued to occupy the foreground of their view. Hardly one of Sophia's letters failed to betray its haunting presence. She wrote on New Year's Eve, 1887, from the Hotel d'Angleterre, Rome, to Sir Arthur Gordon—

“ . . . Father is at last embarked on his Auto-biography, and I act taskmaster and keep him to it whenever his fickle mind yearns after Vatican papers and MSS. which may serve in a second edition of his last book. He gets good time here early and late, and we go out chiefly from 11.30 to 1.30, and 2.30 to 5; but there are too many people in Rome for sanctity of hours! and benevolent archæologists haunt us constantly. I like Sir John Savile [British Ambassador at Rome], and the Embassy people are very pleasant. Then Mr Story is an agreeable artist, we dine there to-night, and we are besieged with kindness. This Jubilee of Leo XIII.* has flooded Rome with notables of all nations, and restored for the moment the old days of the Papacy. The Vatican yesterday was a sight. Crowds of Ecclesiastics waiting for audiences, Officers of the Swiss Guard in all their glory, and chamberlains in quaint costumes fussing about. The Pope is now fully informed by Monsignor Persico, and now *all* the Roman Catholics in Rome are outspoken in disapprobation of Archbishop Walsh and the Irish clericals generally, praising only the Bishop of Limerick. When the Duke of Norfolk and the old Roman Catholic English party insisted on the immorality in Ireland being noticed, only *then* did the Pope send Persico to *find out* what he *knew*. . . . Father was magnificently received at the Liberal Unionist Meeting in Edinburgh on December 13, and every point was taken. Even the Gladstonians present listened well. You would be astonished at his vigour, play, fire, force and action. It is perfect. They were enthusiastic over him, and Scotchmen are worth speaking to. The opinion in Scotland is said to be steadily going against Home Rule, but

* Pope Leo XIII., 1878-1903.

no Home Ruler told me this! However, I believe time is all we want. Father's speech at the Liberal Unionist Conference on December 8, was declared on all sides to be out and away the best in the afternoon, and the Duke of Argyll's in the evening. It delighted me how everybody wrote and said how grandly father had helped 'as no one else could.' If we were in England, he would be stumping now; and in this month the risk is great, so I'm thankful we are out of reach."

On the following day they were both present at the great New Year's Service in St Peter's when the Pope, for the first time, officiated after the manner of his predecessors, and heard the enthusiastic "*vivas!*" and cheers with which the huge crowd of worshippers greeted his appearance. "It was too much! I could hardly bear it!" was the Pope's comment on this enthusiasm to my father and Sophia, in the audience which he gave them later.

Sophia to The Lady Laura Ridding.

"Rome,
"January 2, 1888.

"We return your salutations for 1888, and some day Father may write to you! He is a very dissipated young man! and what with his devotion to Society and his Autobiography and certain Vatican papers in which he revels, he has little time for a daughter out of sight and therefore out of mind! though he murmurs fervent blessings when letters arrive, or he happens to notice photographs. So far he has only been in St Peter's once (yesterday), and to see some fine dug-ups in a small gallery near the station: a grand torso of Juno, a Boxer, marvellous in its painful realism, and two or three Bacchus and Adonis, to which Sir W. Gregory was our guide. We started at 6.30 a.m. yesterday for St Peter's and were back here at 12.30. It was a magnificent sight, and we were struck by the devoutness of the people around us, but it was queer! When the Pope came,

they burst into *vivas* and waved and cheered wildly. The Swiss Guards, many Chamberlains, Guards of Nobles, one hundred and seventy Bishops, Cardinals, Monsignors, etc., without end in magnificent raiment, the flood of monks and nuns inundating Rome, and pilgrims from all parts made the scene very picturesque, and the silver trumpets were glorious. Father objected to the carrying of the Pope in his white and gold sedan as semi-barbarous, and the out-walkers with mighty standards with white ostrich feathers, but from the Roman point of view I don't, as the object is that every child may see the Vicar of Christ. The Pope looked like a waxen image in his gold and white and his dazzling mitre, which, after Mass, was changed for a jewelled tiara. At certain parts of the service when all present joined, the effect was very moving, the great Church full and the rich Italian voices ringing from end to end."

On the 16th, Sophia returned to her political concern, and compared English and Italian parliamentary procedure.

"Crispi," she wrote, "since he became Prime Minister is very sober, ruling sternly, repressing extreme Radicalism and professing devotion to England. You will not be surprised to hear that I am repeatedly asked what is the meaning of the weakness and inefficiency of the English Executive; and several have said: 'Why ever do you speak so much? Every day a speech! We cannot understand it.' No wonder! Who does? Here, a measure is brought forward, laid on the table with no speech; a Committee from all sides is appointed to thrash it out in private, and, when thoroughly weeded, enlarged, or however it be, it is then discussed and practically its fate is settled. Of course the strong point of this system is, that there is time, cool blood, and real consideration, instead of our way of rushing at a thing and boiling ourselves into absolutely artificial statements and opinions; and, what is far more important, there is no danger of any Bill being rushed through the House before any one has thought it out. No one can understand the possibility of Home Rule

having been thrown at us and nearly passed as it was."

On January 29, 1888, she wrote to me about their interview with the Pope—

"Father and I had a most interesting audience from the Pope last Thursday, 26th. He gave us forty minutes and talked very freely over politics, Ireland, and Christianity. He is very striking: so keen, bright, full of fire and vigour and great dignity. We sat on his right and his left, and I felt like a supporting angel or saint in a picture! We had two blessings and an extra one at parting for all our family. Father has been able to do a good deal while here on the Irish subject."

(This he had done, not by talking English politics, but by helping to remove misconceptions as to matters of fact, such as the Irish Land laws, the Crimes Act, and the system of organized terrorism and fighting against property with which the British Government had to contend.)

She gave further details in the following extracts:—

"We were dressing to attend the Requiem Mass in memory of Victor Emanuel when the summons to the Vatican came. Dr Virtue, the Roman Bishop of Portsmouth, was our chaperon, and we three went in to His Holiness' inner private room alone. We had passed through magnificent galleries and rooms innumerable, with Swiss Guards as sentinels and courtly Chamberlains, cassocked Monsignors receiving and guiding deputations and presents, the Patriarch of Silesia and some other Bishops; and then we came to the inner room, long and narrow, a simple room with a few books about, a writing-table covered with papers, a crucifix on it and a few good busts about, and at the end in his chair on a raised step sat the old man—in white cassock with skull cap—huge gold crucifix on a chain on his breast, and a white cloak thrown back. He rose and

stepped down to receive us, and seated us on his right and left, but the Bishop stood. He was most courteous and charming, began at once about Ireland and said he had written two letters twice expressing his disapproval of the means Parnell used or allowed, and of all rebellion and revolution; that he had sent Monsignor Persico to inquire, and had ordered that an interval should elapse before he gave his report: 'though,' said the Pope, 'I know what his judgment is: he is a very fair man, very careful examiner, and from what he has already communicated, much has been learnt.' The Pope said *if needful* he was prepared to do more;* but that in time he thought his letters would have weight and be obeyed: 'But even in my Italy, where all are Catholics,' he said, 'all do not obey me! We have our Parnells here!' He spoke most warmly of the support and protection given to Roman Catholics in all the Queen's dominions, and said he wished always to support her. He crossed the room to say good-bye and called me '*Miafiglia*,' which much excited Bishop Virtue! After this visit Father said: 'If all Popes had been like Leo XIII. Christendom might have been united till this day.' I forgot to say that before the Pope and Father began politics, Father gave Cardinal Newman's message; and His Holiness' face lit up as he said: 'My Cardinal! it was not easy, it was not easy. They said he was too liberal, but I had determined to honour the Church in honouring Newman. I always had a cult for him. I am proud that I was allowed to honour such a man.'

Accompanied by Freda and George Biddulph and by the son of Sir Arthur Gordon, my father and Sophia visited Sicily and Southern Italy after leaving Rome. My father's eager interest made him reckless of fatigue; and after a series of exhausting visits to Paestum, Herculaneum and Pompeii, undeterred by the weight of seventy-seven years and the buffettings of storms, he insisted on joining the rest of the party

* This the Pope did a little later, by his Rescript against Boycotting and the Plan of Campaign.

in their ascent of Vesuvius. After accomplishing this feat, they travelled north by Rome, Florence and Venice, where they spent a delightful Easter as the guests of Sir Henry and Lady Layard. On their way back to England they visited Laon and Rheims. There, to Sophia's joy, their hotel rooms looked out on the Angels, and she slept at night in the peace of the belief that "the last thing at night and first in the morning they seemed personally guarding and blessing her."

My father and Sophia returned home in April, both of them somewhat overstrained by the ardent keenness and insatiable thirst with which they had partaken of the bounteous intellectual, archæological, historical, artistic and social feast served to them by that queen of hostesses, beautiful Italy. My sister's health had certainly improved, but she continued to suffer from constant fatigue and depression, the inevitable penalty incurred by her for having exhausted her shallow reserves of strength, instead of having accumulated fresh supplies. In the summer my father had a severe illness, partly occasioned by the strain of serving as Chairman to the Royal Commission on University Education for London in addition to his other duties, but partly, undoubtedly, by his extraordinary mental and physical exertions abroad. The soothing quiet of Blackmoor was very restorative to them both, and my father was on the road to complete recovery, when on September 26, my brother's second son, Robert Stafford Arthur Palmer, was born, the eldest* having been born on April 15, 1887, the preceding year.

Sophia reported on my father's condition to Sir Arthur Gordon on September 27.

"Father is looking beautiful and is deep again in his autobiography. I only allow him one morning

* Roundell Cecil Palmer, now Viscount Wolmer.

and two afternoon hours to do this. He is younger ! but I am jealous of his overtaxing his new strength, and am keeping him a semi-invalid as long as I can. I am never free: either writing for him, out with him (bath-chair and driving) or talking to him to keep him from too much reading or wish to work. His correspondence with Mr Gladstone could not be prevented. They exchange quite tender notes (extra to the public ones) saying they wish not to pain one another, etc. Father's dear face looks fresher and younger and brighter than for long past, and that is the greatest blessing of all !"

A letter written on August 25, crossed this one, showing how high a value Sir Arthur placed on Sophia's correspondence with him. He said—

"Such a number of things I want you to write to me about, some of which nobody else will write to one about, and some of which nobody else can write to me about. I have already mentioned some subjects, and will now set down a few more: not in order of importance or interest, but just as they occur to me. 1st. Bishop of Lincoln's case. 2nd. General outcome of the Lambeth Conference. 3rd. What is the true state of *domestic* affairs at Berlin? 4th. Does Lord Salisbury think that the meeting of the Emperors has made a long continuation of peace probable? 5th. Who is to be the new Bishop of Oxford? 6th. Gladstone's Golden Wedding. 7th. Lady Frederick Cavendish. 8th. Your father's idea on the Parnell Commission. 9th. Lord Robert Cecil's marriage. 10th. St Paul's reredos. I have by no means exhausted the number of topics I should like to put."

It was during the summer of 1888 that Sophia paid her famous visit to the Nellbicks at Blackmoor, which she often used to relate in Hampshire dialect to the unfailing delight of her friends and family. Mr and Mrs Joe Nellick were an aged couple, great allies of my sister's, possessed of opulent stores of remarkable anecdotes and native philosophy, which

every time she left their cottage made Sophia feel enriched by new experiences. It was Joe Nellbick, who, as a fellow-victim of the influenza fiend, supplied her with this masterly diagnosis of their enemy : "It be bad! It's uppards and innards and downwards all at once!" On this occasion, after listening to my sister's stories of "her travels in they foreign parts," Mrs Nellbick proceeded to inform her of the equally interesting events that had occurred to them here at home in England.

"You may not have known it, my lady, but Joe, he never used to believe in the angels, but now he do!" Joe shook his head in assent and mumbled inaudibly, and Sophia asked them what had made him believe? and this is the story as Mrs Nellbick told it. She had gone out last autumn to gather some faggots, and she saw one great big faggot lying by itself, and she had picked it up and had put it with the others in her bundle and had brought it home and had showed it to Joe, and she had wanted to put it on the fire that very night. And Joe had said : "No! let it bide till the winter. It will come in useful then." So she let it bide; and a long time afterwards there came a very cold day in the winter and she saw the faggot lying among the others, and she just thought it was exactly what she wanted to coax up the fire which had got low, so that she could make Joe a cup of tea, as he was ill in bed. So she picked the faggot up and was just going to put it on the fire, when a voice called out: "Chop un!" She looked all round to see who had spoken. There was nobody! She called up the stairs to Joe in bed : "Did you speak?" and Joe called back: "No!" So she thought she must have imagined it. So again she picked up the faggot and again she moved to put it on the fire, when the voice said a second time: "Drop 'ee and chop un!" She looked all around again and went outside to see, but there was nobody; so again she started for to put the faggot on the fire,

and a third time the voice shouted: "Chop un!" so loud that she fairly jumped! So then she thought there must be something in it, and she chopped a little bit off the faggot and put the little bit on the fire, and there was a tremendous explosion! So she didn't put any more on after that, but kept the rest and showed it to her son Joe when he came in from his work. And he said: "Why, mother! It's one of them big signal rockets which they had for the Jubilee Celebration!" "And now Joe he believes in the angels. I've allus told him they were as thick as feathers around us if only we could see them!"

His illness had aged my father considerably. He acknowledged, as he had not done before, that he now felt the need of more rest and quiet, and he never again went abroad. To the end of his life he was always full of occupations, he took his share in Judicial Appeals, in Parliamentary Legislation and Church Defence work in London, and occasionally addressed meetings in various great centres of the country. He had always some literary work on hand; but for the larger portions of the years 1888 to 1893, he and Sophia remained quietly at Blackmoor, where the echoes of the trial and judgment of the Bishop of Lincoln, and the sensational trial, fall, and death of Parnell caused him to look with grave anxiety towards the future of our Church and State.

"It is, I am afraid," he wrote in November, 1890, to Mr Goldwin Smith, "a bad look-out for the rising generation, but I shall probably not live to see what comes of it. I shall, at least, have the consolation of leaving behind me a son, who has not hitherto been wanting (and I trust never will be) in pluck and resolution to do his duty according to his lights."

In the February of 1889 my father practically completed the writing of his memorials, although he added a few additions in the autumn of the following

year. They covered a range of a hundred and twenty-four years, and consisted of "Memorials Family and Personal, 1766-1855," and "Memorials Personal and Political, 1854-1890." It is to Sophia that we owe the first conception of the idea. She urged my father to write them; she encouraged him through many interruptions to begin, to continue, and to bring the undertaking to a final conclusion.

While the volumes were passing through the press, she read and reread them; and, when allowed, criticized and corrected points. "To me it is deeply interesting," she said, "as the stuff out of which Father was made. In writing of himself he is now and then rather too outspoken perhaps, but he says that unless he writes truly, he will not write at all. He speaks of struggles of good and evil within him, and perhaps his life may help much more when it is known that he was to the full 'a man of like passions,' for often people seem to think that Father was born holy. The Memoirs are again and again full of beautiful touches, and through the whole book is an atmosphere of living holiness which is refreshing."

It was for this reason that other friends had urged my father to write his Memorials because, to quote the words of one of them: "They would be of value not only historically, but as showing how possible it is to combine the strictest conscientiousness with political life."

After my father's death, at our request, Sophia edited the volumes for publication. Having triumphantly secured that, by these means, my father's views of contemporary history and his judgments on the grave political and ecclesiastical questions of his day should be made available for help and guidance to future generations, she next set her heart on obtaining a portrait worthy of him for the benefit of posterity. Three already existed painted by Sir Francis Grant, Mr Ouless, and Mr Collier, but Sophia disapproved of them all.

When, therefore, in the spring of 1889, my father consented to the request of the President and Fellows of Trinity College, Oxford, that he would sit for his portrait to Miss Busk, Sophia was sanguine about the new opportunity, and was filled with delight as she watched the stately gracious portrait take shape. She wrote during the sittings—

“We are lucky to have had such an artist sent to us. She appreciates my father thoroughly. He likes her and they discuss every variety of subject, which brings his features into play and shows his eyes and mouth in a very different light to that in which other artists have seen them. This likeness, with the special dignity of the official dress, has an individuality and charm of expression which is a treasure for us, and will show the children and their children also something of their grandfather.”

The premature death of this gifted artist a few months later deprived England of a most promising portrait painter and my sister of a new and valued friend.

In 1893, the Benchers of Lincoln’s Inn requested Mr Watts to paint my father’s portrait for them. Both he and Sophia enjoyed the hours of his sittings, for Mr and Mrs Watts were personal friends in whose society they delighted, while they felt deep admiration for the great painter’s works and for the noble spirit which inspired them. The result, though a fine head, was unfortunately not altogether satisfactory to either Sophia or me as a likeness.

As seen from certain aspects, these latest years of my father’s life were some of the most felicitous in Sophia’s. Her mental powers were at their greatest. They drew daily nutriment from her constant companionship with him whom she regarded as the incarnation of wisdom and fatherly perfection, and to whom she was entirely devoted in heart, mind, and disposition. She filled an important place as

head of her father's house, as hostess of their friends; and was thus able freely to exercise her social talents in entertaining and drawing out both the treasures of her father's mind and those of their guests'. She was able to see us all frequently and to invite whom-ever she wanted to see to Portland Place or Black-moor. She was queen of the parish, taking an intense interest in all the church services, the parochial doings, the clergy and their people. The clergy, at times, found her eager suggestions and criticisms rather trying, but the poor people delighted in her frequent visits and abounding plans and sympathies. Except when occupied with my father and with ministrations to "the seven ages of man in the house," she was supreme disposer of her time, able to plan her days' occupations with singular freedom.

But for her exaggerated anxieties concerning the handling of her domestic team, and for her frequently recurrent attacks of influenza, life was to her, in those years, a very fruitful and satisfying experience.

"I am grateful to any one who wishes me happiness, and still more when the wish means a prayer," she used to say, "for one has a thirst and hope for happiness which nothing quite quenches, though one's ideas of its shape change," and, "Father is just now wonderfully bright and well, and I am feeling so well. It's a joy to be alive; and, better still, to be glad to be alive."

One other advantage greatly valued by Sophia should be mentioned, *i.e.* her rich opportunities for reading and study. She was an interesting critic. We both enjoyed discussions over books, as we often found that we each noticed points overlooked by the other. She was characteristically dogmatic in her criticisms, which were often overweighted by her partialities and prejudices. Her fastidiousness led her frequently to apply to the characters in fiction the *peas-and-featherbeds* test of the Queen-Mother in

the fairy-story; and when they failed to pass it, she seemed hardly willing to recognize any other merits in the composition. I remember how once she only gave a grudging admission of the justice of Sir Stafford Northcote's and Mr Lowell's praises to us of Miss Thorneycroft Fowler's "Concerning Isabel Carnaby," and of Mrs Burnett's "Little Lord Fauntleroy"; and how she pointed out to them, to their amusement, the blemishes caused to both stories by the pseudo-smart and pseudo-domestic conversations. For the same reason, she never seemed to realize that the weakness of Mr Rochester's "Company's" talk in the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of "Jane Eyre" were negligible trivialities compared with the marvellous structure of Charlotte Brontë's great work.

Whenever her peculiar prejudices were not roused, Sophia was a critic worth attention. I give here a few specimens of her opinions on books which she was reading at this period. They show how she gathered ideas from them.

On Tolstoy's "Anna Karenina." "What a powerful, tremendous sort of book this is! There are here and there coarse realistic touches which seem unavoidable in foreign novelists now, and which always rub me up; but the whole book is well worth reading as a pitiless vivisection of character, as a sketch of Russian morals and religion, and for the history of Levine. Above all, there is the Nemesis on violation of duty and defiance of duty. The book strikes me as a rather unusual combination of massing and detail, the bold light and shade of Rembrandt and the minutest painting of the Pre-Raphaelite."

On Dumas' "Joseph Balsamo." "Dumas' magic elements in his semi-historical novels give them a special charm in these days of very and only realistic writing; and Dumas uses his magicians so discreetly, that they pander to one's still not-quite-extinct bump of superstition, and have a possibility of possibility about them, very clever. Through the novel there is

the *smell of decay* which, I take it, is the genius of Dumas."

On H. James' "The Bostonians." "It's his best smart capital writing. Very clever in its hints; and in one or two touches and passages the beauty is really great. But, after all, it is Jamesian. *Cui bono?*"

On H. Kingsley's "Mademoiselle Matilde." "The whole atmosphere of Mademoiselle Matilde always struck me as singularly fine, sympathetic, penetrating. One figuratively gathers a shawl round one and looks out. Do you know what I mean? One shivers, one is sad, but one must look out at the strange night beauty and look into the darkness as if looking would bring sight. It is only a slight sketch, but it had all this effect on me."

On R. Browning's "The Ring and the Book." "This is one of Browning's best. Is he coarse? and how much is it possible to avoid when the subject is life-in-the-lump? 'Coarse,' in an objectionable sense to me, means 'dirt for dirt's sake,' but 'coarse,' applied to Browning (I often hear it) surely means only that he is modelling with clay. Your hands must be soiled, but it's quite clean soil. I don't think in the adverse sense it's true of Browning, because I always feel strengthened and ennobled and never stained by his writings. How exquisite a conception Pompilia is! It makes me hasten to flush with gratitude for being a woman."

On Lewes' "Life of Goethe." "This disappointed me in the literary execution. With such a subject one had a right to expect a sweeping-along interest, whereas it is only the subject, the full matter and interesting details of life and the growth of his works which carry you on. Sometimes Lewes gives a brilliant bit; sometimes, for a page or two, is free and fresh, but generally is stodgy and dull in writing; and his moralizings would please the Devil, I should say! Mr Lewes' moral utterances are quite worthy of a remark from Mephistopheles: the nice way in which he distinguishes between this and that phase of immorality, picks his path among the puddles, draws up his skirts, gives a word of kind shelter and is entirely *sans reproche*, speaking for a misunderstood

genius who flirted, jilted, and was, on the whole, not so bad as he was made out. All this is remarkable."

On Aldis Wright's "Letters and Literary Remains of E. Fitzgerald." "I have heard Lord Tennyson talk much of him and the semi-shipwreck he made of his life, that I specially enjoy the book. It is three volumes of his letters, very easy reading and as fresh as a very fresh mind. The conclusion is sad; but I think he made a mistake in unintentional ignorance, which God will mend. He, Mr Fitzgerald, was not an agnostic, though he thought he was."

On Shakespeare. "I have been reading 'John,' 'Richard II.,' 'Henry IV.,' and am now at 'Henry V.' They are very refreshing and full of the wisdom of proverbs, but what strikes me with surprise in a man who knew human nature so marvellously, is, that in these historical plays he makes villains and poor sorry creatures and very commonplace, think such wise and noble thoughts; as soon as they are squeezed by trouble or difficulty, out flow these beauties like whey; but you can only squeeze out what is in! and though no doubt trials do shake off sometimes the mere pettinesses and bring out the fine points, they don't charm all at once a mean man into a noble or a weak into a strong; and it's not the actions Shakespeare wrings out unnaturally, but thoughts; and I doubt them."

On Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." "Yes, I quite understand about the great sorrows which alter life and after which nothing can effect you *to your roots*. That must be Bunyan's meaning. As a child—no, until I too knew, I could not understand why he placed the Valley of the Shadow of Death midway."

On Dean Church's "Discipline of the Christian Character." "These four sermons preached in 1885 in St Paul's are *admirable*. His style is a satisfaction and the matter full of thought, suggestion, and spiritual help. A few words in this book on the luxury, splendour, cultivation, vice, free-thought of the present time, which recall irresistibly Imperial Rome, started this idea in me. If it is indeed true that we are in the totter of such a rich decay, instead of its presaging the end of this world as is generally

taken for granted, it seems to me more likely that, as the Fall of Rome was the new birth of a second order of things, so our Fall—the fall of this our huge confused civilization, so crude still, yet so ultra refined and civilized, so enlightened yet so dark—may usher in a third order of things; and the stage of growth and development be partly in the great West, the Americas partly, but mostly Australia and (hopping about) India and China; and as our arts succeeded the Old World arts, so will the arts and sciences, now in their first lisplings, be the language of the coming Nations. Electricity, magnetism and all the armies of engineering and light. And there is this comfortable thought, that, as the early Christians were mistaken in their horror of civilization *per se* and tried vainly to stamp it out to save the Church and Truth, so I think we may come to see that the very discoveries, which seem to the short-sighted puny intellects of men to be at variance with revealed religion, are the very means and ministers of more teaching, more knowledge, more faith and more love, confirming what in earlier stages they seemed to contradict."

On Religious Controversy in Magazine Articles. "The bold or rather assumed matter-of-course discussion, tossing about, social-talk handling of the deepest subjects, of (until now most generally received as) truths and, above all, of the Gospels themselves: this is what shows a terrible development and change in public opinion. I believe nothing has done more harm than introducing discussion of such subjects into novels and periodicals, from Newman's 'Loss and Gain' onwards. It is the wrong way of treatment, and makes proper thought, fair thought, honest study, impossible. But after all there is this thought. Our Master is always before the world. The very men who deny, deride, oppose themselves in their loud denials, in their mockings and scourgings, in their fierce opposition or light scorn, in their crucifying and neglect, always hold up the Son of God before men. While they deny His Divinity, they proclaim it; and He, the despised and rejected, is without any rival, before and above men. *He is never out of sight.* 'If He is not God, why make such a fuss? Leave

Him alone if you've nothing to fear,' was the remark of a heathen London artisan, bored with the arguments and declamations in a Socialistic Hall in Old Street in the City.

"My unlearned view is that patience is sorely needed nowadays. We are all in such a hurry; and Truth, which is God, will declare itself if we wait, and we may do infinite harm by trying to be propitiatory for God."

In connection with literary criticisms, I may mention here, that among the conversations carefully entered by my sister in her diaries were literary discussions, or monologues, which took place at Lord Tennyson's Surrey house in Aldworth, or at his Isle of Wight home at Farringford. Here is one of them: they had got on to the subject of who were the great poets.

Lord Tennyson to Sophia. "Shelley a great poet? Of course he was, but he is not to my mind one of the great poets: not like Shakespeare or Goethe, for instance, not one of the few great Brain Men, the Men who are worlds: Shakespeare, Goethe, Homer, Dante? Dante? Well, but—he is terribly—in his definite Hell part, terribly on the edge. . . ."

(Going back to Shelley and Byron.) "Lovely sounds has Shelley, but many times he is unreal, unsimple. I don't care a bit for his 'West Wind' or 'Moon' either, for that reason. When I was a boy, I believed in Shelley's lighting the nineteenth and twentieth centuries! I swore by him. But he has lost his hold on me; and as to Byron, why, I can't read him now, though once I was Byronic to my very toe-nails and finger-tips—always passes away, such violent passion. Byron is stronger than Shelley—more vigour. 'Don Juan' is wonderful! Oh! the power, the abused power of that man."

(On Mr Browning). *Lord Tennyson to Sophia.* "Robert Browning has no music. He is force with a vengeance! but a poet has no right to defy music. Parts of 'The Ring and the Book' are poetry and beautiful. If he would condense. No one like him!"

(On Lord Tennyson). *Mr Browning to Sophia.* "Alfred is all sweetness, no life—" (later) "Ah! When Tennyson is on fire, his words catch and sweep you off your feet. At his best, his sense of life embodied in his exquisite sounds is glorious."

Sophia's New Year letter which carried good wishes for 1890 to Ceylon showed her to be in a condition of peaceful content.

Sophia to The Hon. Sir Arthur Gordon.

"We were all together at Christmas—that is, as all together as we can ever be in a bodily sense now. It was a great happiness and a most happy time to us and to Father. The Riddings, Biddulphs, Waldegraves and children and Wolmers and children, but I never miss my mother more than at such times, and still, as much or more than five years ago, I expect her. We have been and are all so happy together and in a way not very common. And this and the certain knowledge that one and all have one Faith, one Hope and are in one Service makes me feel I can't thank God, can't ever thank Him enough. And the hunger and longing for our Dead is not disloyal or ungrateful. Indeed it is the contrary. . . .

"As time goes on, though the want grows instead of lessening, yet one seems to be coming in a sort of half-alive and very dulled way, into deeper and fuller life. One seems, I say, for often I only feel dead and dull, but again I find one is living and growing, I hope; and through the ache and under the ache a sort of gasping, very fluttering sense of what everlasting life and love means. Not God's, so much as all of us, all of our loves, who are here and there. I hope my love for Him grows—but—different to what other people seem to be—I used to feel as if I loved in a warm living way so easily and strongly when I was full of life; and now, with a sort of maimed inside, it's all maimed and poor and dull. But I suppose every part of one has to be pruned to grow. . . .

"Lord Tennyson's new poems are marvellously

fresh. Much of them written in his eightieth year. I like 'Demeter,' the verses to Lord Dufferin and to Miss May Boyle and 'Romney's Remorse' best. Browning I have not read. The book is not to be had. They are reprinting it as fast as they can. Now I must leave off. We have had at home a fortnight of something every day in Christmas lines, and I am glad to be resting a little. But as everything succeeded, weather and all! Nobody was cross or ill and everybody happy, the slight fatigue connected with our fussy British way of keeping Christmas was well spent. Our biggest undertaking was *Tableaux Vivants* by village children and others, thirty-nine children, which were really lovely; and the preparations and rehearsals seemed to delight the children. I was forcibly reminded of Carlyle's Clothes' Theory! the usually very ordinary children were transformed into veritable princes and princesses, and I would have undertaken to pass them and their dancing in any 'upper ten' party!"

These family gatherings were always rich with enjoyment for us all and not least for Sophia, in whose heart we each had our individual place, a personal possession guarded by her for every one of us from the oldest of her brothers and sisters down to the youngest baby among the grandchildren. A fountain of joy, rising as the years went on to greater and greater heights, flowed from the love and delight with which these children inspired her. On the birth of each new baby she used to say that, "It was so nice to feel one's heart stretching, as if it were for this new life to love."

Sophia had always a maternal love and reverence for children. She played with them and studied their funny little thoughts with earnest enjoyment. She was a splendid story-teller, and grown-up men and women remember how, in their nursery days, in Lady Rosebery's, Lady Gordon's, Mrs Freshfield's and other mothers' drawing-rooms, they sat an entranced circle of small listeners round Sophia on

the floor, absorbed in her wonderful fairy stories, or in the adventures of Spot, the sparrow, or Coco, Sophia's monkey-foe on the *Nefert*, all woven for them "out of her own head."

The present Lord Stanmore says—

"How we loved the 'Ogre' game with her!" (a game based on one which we as children used to play in Portland Place, called in our day "Old Yanny!") "I remember so clearly what trouble she took with children, how she talked to us *on a level* as if we were rational beings. I think that it was with small children that her great powers of understanding were greatest."

This sympathy and affection felt so warmly by my sister for other people's children were intensified tenfold when the children were those of her nearest and dearest, who shared her home and were constantly with her, as was the case with my brother's children.

Their aunt's letters were full of delicious little word sketches of them. Here is a description of a Blackmoor Sunday walk with the *doyen* of the party, May Waldegrave,* then aged five—

"On Sunday, Grannipa, May and I went walking. 'We'll blackberry, Grannipa!'—Not to-day, dear, in our Sunday clothes.'—'There *is* blackberries; I know there *is*, Grannipa.' Later on, the same answer rather less firmly: 'I know where there's blackberries *really*, Grannipa.' Later still, the same answer in a depreciating tone. I go into a cottage to leave something, don't sit down and return to my friends, but, in that one minute, they are gone! Voices by a hedge, a call of triumph: 'We're blackberrying, Fia! Such good blackberries!' and behold May in comfort on the sward, Grannipa very much the reverse, in fact, in almost the position of the historic Man of Thessaly, sacrificing Sunday best, hands, back and, worst of all, Principle (not Sabbatarian, but his word!). Says I to May: 'I thought we were not to blackberry.'—'You

* Now Lady Mary Bevan.

was very long,' quoth May.—'No! She wasn't long, May. She has not been long enough! But May wanted me to pick a few she saw on this hedge.'—'Oh, Grannipa!' "

This was about an infant niece left in Sophia's charge—

"Baby said: 'Think about mummie whiles I draw,' then added, after a second's silence: 'Do your thinking aloud!'"

"Ah! Many a one, Baby dear,
Has wished that wish, I ween:
That each might read the other clear
And nothing come between.

"God wills it otherwise, sweetheart!
And to our wish says nay:
Each by himself must think apart
Until some other day."

When Mabel Palmer was four years old Sophia wrote to me—

"It's a pity George is not in Mabel's position, who says: 'Well! at any rate *I* have no duty!' She is in a remarkably uncontrollable state at present—a goat among the sheep. She announced to me: 'I have a secret about you. Shall I tell you? *All, everything* of yours is really mine!' Is that not charming Socialism clearly expressed."

And about Top* and Bobby,† white-haired cherubs, aged respectively seven and six—

"The boys go on Monday. They are so well and so fascinating. Top describes himself as: 'very blood-thirsty like papa, but Bobby is only rather blood-thirsty, like mamma!' Top groans over Bobby's tongue, and says, 'How he babillers, his words flow ceaselessly.' I asked Bobby if his tongue was overworked. 'No, if I don't talk, I suffer. I

* Now Viscount Wolmer.

† The Hon. Robert S. A. Palmer.

am so uncomfortable in my stucckum, my throat and my head. I must talk to be comfortable.'"

Top, at seven years old, in 1894, developed a remarkable talent for organization; and, with Sophia's consent, converted her boudoir at Blackmoor into a make-believe club, called by him The Nest. The owner of the room was made an Honorary Member, and required to observe the following Regulations and Rules, drawn up by the founder:—

"*Regulations* :—

1. Members requested not to be rampageous.
2. Members requested not to squabble or squeal else they will be shown the door.
3. Members requested not to take away pencils out of The Nest. If so, they may not use one for a week.
4. Members (if one member) hits the other in back or face or ribs it counts not; but if you hit in the stomach, it counts and you leave The Nest.

"*Rules* :—

1. Do not show the things to non-members.
2. Only members may use cupboard things.
3. Members to replace all they take.
[N.B.—*This rule betrays suggestion from the Honorary Member.*]
4. Members requested not to sneak about The Nest.
5. Members not to tell Rules.
6. Members requested not to add to The Nest without leave from the Head. [*Query: or should it read from Honorary Member?*]"

Sophia welcomed all invasions into her boudoir from the children. Wonderful "Anteloope Hunts" used to take place there, and ravishing "Animals tea-parties." (It is needless to explain that, in consideration of Aunt Fia's aversion to live animals, the

brute guests at these festivals were placid china animals from a cupboard and her mantelshelf, which was the browsing-ground of a large menagerie.) At these remarkable feasts, although the majority of the guests were constitutionally unable to do justice to the fare of raisins and currants, it somehow disappeared. Chess duels also took place on these occasions, in which Aunt Fia's queen had a way of nearly always walking into the traps prepared for her, with the result that her adversary nearly always won the game.

The following recollections are sent to me by Wolmer, the eldest of my brother's three boys:—

“Fia is in my earliest recollections as a child. She was a cross between a fairy godmother and a romp—a person with whom you could have unending fun, and of whom we were all passionately fond. We often used to go into her boudoir, which was full of mysteries and delightful little animals with whom we used to play for hours. She also used to regale us with stories of her youth and my father's youth, which I have never forgotten.

“One of her favourite habits was to send us on little messages all over the house, which made us feel very important and increased the bonds of companionship with her.

“Sometimes she used to bring us to Dubbadare [the children's name for their grandfather] when we had asked some question which she thought would amuse him. He used to laugh very much and give some answer which we generally did not understand. I remember once saying to her that I did not agree with something papa had said, so she brought me to Dubbadare, who explained that everybody was entitled to their own opinion, but it was a son's duty to respect the opinion of his father. I remember feeling at the time that I could not understand why one should respect the opinion of his father more than that of any one else.

“If we left paper lying about the garden she used to bring us to Dubbadare to be told off. When I

once suggested to her that it would be very useful to have a secret passage from the housekeeper's storeroom to the hall, she brought me before him to make the suggestion which, to my astonishment, caused him a good deal of merriment.

"We also used to confide in her all our secrets and plans, and were always very anxious to get her collaboration in writing for *Answers* or *Tit-Bits*.

"She always impressed on us the necessity for cleanliness and orderliness, which we regarded as one of her amiable fads and quite incomprehensible to reasonable beings. She also impressed us enormously with her love for Blackmoor and all the people there, to whom she introduced us (as we considered it) and made us friends.

"One vivid recollection that I have of Fia, is how she taught us to sing 'God save the Queen' when Bobby and I were very little boys. We were driving back one winter's evening from a concert, or some such entertainment, at Alton in the brougham (Bobby and I and Fia), when it transpired in conversation that we did not know the National Anthem. So Fia insisted on singing it to us on the spot. Since, however, proper loyalty demands that this anthem should only be sung standing, she insisted upon standing up in the brougham as it went down Worldham Hill, although she could not stand erect because the ceiling of the brougham was not high enough. In this cramped position she sang all three verses fortissimo, much to our and, I suppose, Golder's (the coachman's) edification."

In the garden Sophia was enchanted to find that when quite a tiny girl, Mabel showed a love for flowers as deep as her own.

"No word but passion expresses the child's love for them," she wrote to a friend. "All, wild and garden, mosses, fungi, ferns, she goes after and treasures; learns their names, never forgets them, and would, if she might, be collecting from morning till night. The nursery window-sills and her play table are a garden of the gods! One corner of the kitchen garden is ablaze with sunflowers, hollyhocks,

dahlias, gladiolas, and tangled masses of low autumn beauties in front; it never looked so blazing as this year. Mabel loves this walk, and said: 'Fia, shall we call it Glory-Corner?' Was not that pretty?"

"Glory-Corner" might also well have been the name given to that shrine in Sophia's heart, where blossomed all the bright-hued aspirations, hopes, delights and prayers for these children so precious to her, whose future she imagined to herself in the rainbow beauty of a lovely promise.

CHAPTER VII

1893—1896

(AGE: FORTY-ONE TO FORTY-THREE)

THE virulence of the political attacks on the National Church reached an acute stage in the spring of 1893, when, in the last year of Mr Gladstone's last Premiership, a Bill was introduced into the House of Commons "To prevent the creation of new interests in the Church of England bishoprics, dignities and benefices in Wales and Monmouthshire," under the title of "The Established Church (Wales) Bill."

My father's conviction, as expressed in the Resolution of the House of Laymen of Canterbury Province over which he presided, that "Disestablishment in Great Britain would be a disaster to the country, both as dissociating the State from all public recognition of religion and its practical effects," led him to desire that this new menace should be met by a development of the work of Church Defence on lines of public protests, issue of literature, the formation of Central Committees and especially of Parochial Church Committees, so as to create an organization which should extend its ramifications through every town and village of the country. In June, 1894, this important Society was accordingly founded under the presidency of Archbishop Benson, with the name of The Central Church Committees. Laymen and women were enlisted in every diocese to fill the place of Diocesan Organizing Secretaries; and Sophia (who had been appointed a Member of the Ladies' Central Church Committee and of their

Literature Committee) was at once requested by the Bishop of Winchester* to act as Organizing Secretary for his great diocese.

Moved by her eager zeal and by my father's unsparing labours for the cause, she accepted this heavy new responsibility without hesitation; and she continued the work for over eight years, till her marriage and departure from England necessitated her giving it up.

In the autumn of 1894 she began to organize, travelling all over Hampshire, the Isle of Wight and the Surrey portion of Winchester Diocese; speaking at a large number of meetings, bearing down opposition by sheer determination and charm, and swiftly forming Diocesan, Ruridecanal and Parochial Church Committees in an astonishingly large number of towns and villages. She explained everywhere that these Committees were created for "the spread of instruction, information and encouragement about the obligations and position of the Church and its value as it stands to the whole nation and the poor."

She certainly was an ideal leader for this special work. Her indefatigable energy, eloquence and personal attraction drew enthusiastic helpers to her side with magnetic force. Peers and platelayers, great ladies and dressmakers, sportsmen and invalids, grocers, journalists, railway clerks, diplomats, teachers, village nurses and labourers,—I wonder if any other of the Organizing Secretaries enlisted such a splendid army of workers of such varying grades and occupations. The description of one of her Isle of Wight meetings, by Lady Ellis, shows the effect her presence and words could produce on an audience, composed of somewhat indifferent cold listeners—

"I can well recollect," she writes, "how they were aroused and their interest kindled by Lady

* Bishop Thorold.

Sophia's burning enthusiasm for the rights of the ancient Church of England, and her wrathful indignation over the apathy shown by Churchmen at the attack on their heritage. The audience were quite carried away by her eagerness and zeal; and the hearty applause from every part of the room at the conclusion of her lecture was most appreciative."

At the end of her first year's work, the Bishop of Winchester wrote to bid her "Go on and prosper," adding, "May God bless and prosper your hereditary zeal in so great a cause. I leave you, with a glad mind, the 'freest hand' possible."

It was not by speaking alone that Sophia helped the cause. She rendered valuable service to the Literature Committee, both by her criticisms and insistence on the simplification of language in leaflets provided for popular use, and also by her own compositions. Her Leaflets on the Need and Work of Parish Church Committees, on the position of Church people as Trustees for the work of Christ's Church in this land, and her letters to the newspapers on different aspects of Church Attack and Church Defence, were written in admirably clear, forcible language and always appealed to the highest, most spiritual motives.

Such explanations as the two following show how her Lord and Master and His Kingdom, and not the Church's Rights, were the inspiring idea which filled her heart :—

"The Church endowments were given *for Christ and for His Religion*. The Church rooted in the Land, and twined in and out of the life of the Land, grew on before there was any Parliament—grew on and in with Parliament, for the sake of Christ and the people. So long as we may use the money and buildings for Christ, and teach His Faith, *so long and so long only* do we say, (No surrender of Church money and buildings and our Established Church, so far as in us lies! So help us, God!) But all for the

sake of the Faith ; for the work of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ our Lord ! " *

" The object of all this is to build up, to repair, to strengthen a living Churchmanship, by systematic instruction in all that concerns the Church of England in its Past and Present, by binding together her sons and daughters in loyal service to our Lord and Master, through His Body the Church ; using all classes and people of all opinions in whatever may strengthen His cause and draw souls to His love. All this as regards Church people. As regards those who do not belong to the Church of England, the object, and our bounden duty, is to bring before every citizen of this country the true facts of Church work, Church endowments, Church history. We must not be discouraged by the special difficulties of our time. Each century has its special fortress to keep, its special enemy to meet, and its peculiar trials, temptations and need for wisdom ; but the wisdom is always to be had, the supply of love is unfailing ; single-mindedness and courage, justice and truth and patience, according to God's measure, are all in His treasury for our use, and we cannot fail in the power of the Holy Spirit." †

In the course of the eight years of this work, Sophia had much interesting correspondence on points of historical and liturgical controversy with my husband, Archbishop Benson, Bishops Creighton, Gore, Stubbs, Talbot, Canon Bright, Professor Margoliouth, Sir Offley Wakeman, Dr Headlam and other ecclesiastical scholars. She also gained many new friends in her occasional excursions into other dioceses, when invited to address Church Defence Meetings, such as those held during the Church Congresses of Shrewsbury in 1896, and of Newcastle in 1899. Of the latter, Eleanor, Lady Gort, said—

* From "What is Church Defence?" No. 2. By Lady Sophia Palmer.

† From "Report of the Work of the Church Committee for Church Defence and Church Instruction in Winchester Diocese, for 1898," by Lady Sophia Palmer.

"Sophy spoke splendidly, whether to working people or to villa residents. Every one was delighted by her eloquence. I well knew how greatly people admired her powers of speaking and what an immense help she was to the cause. She threw so much enthusiasm into her speeches and quite spent herself."

Unfortunately I had, personally, very few opportunities of hearing Sophia speak. On those rare occasions, such as a gathering of thousands of young factory girls at the Nottingham Church Congress, or a mixed assemblage of Church people interested in the Church Defence Campaign, or a small drawing-room meeting, called together to hear her plead for the work of the Parochial Mission Women, I felt no doubt as to the current of sympathy established by her between herself and her audience. She seemed to have the power of conveying to them a sense of a large comprehensiveness which embraced them all in her responsive friendliness. Her addresses were always rich with apt illustrations, occasional flashes of fun, pathos, appeal to the reality of the Love of God, and now and then a ray of mystic illumination. Her deep resonant voice kept rather too much on one note. She always stood very still, very upright while she spoke, and her calm, tall presence impressed her hearers rather as that of a prophetess than that of a "Mother in Israel." She went to her various meetings in absolute certainty that she was sent there by her Master to deliver His message, and she recognized the degree to which she had moved her audience with deep joy, as a sign that He had blessed her efforts.

In view of Sophia's exuberant platform work, it is amusing to recall her impressions of the first woman's political meeting which she attended. It was held in Birmingham in the spring of 1889, and was one of a series of Liberal Unionist meetings at which my father was a speaker.

"The Woman's Meeting was interesting and rather surprising. The Town Hall densely full below of women and many men, and the galleries crammed with women. Lord Hartington and Mr Chamberlain each side of the Chairwoman and Speakers, *i.e.* Mrs Ashworth Hallet (niece of Mr Bright), Lady Grant Duff, Mrs Fawcett, Mrs Westlake and some Irish ladies. All but one lady spoke to be heard easily at the very end of the hall. All were clear, some eloquent, particularly Mrs Hallet; and Mrs Fawcett told particularly well. But to me the interest and surprise was these ladies holding the attention of this great assembly, not on sufferance, but absorbing their attention and applause for three and a half mortal hours! If it is to be done, no ladies could have done it less offensively or in better taste. It was perfectly 'feminine.' All the same, I renewed my vows against becoming a platform woman!"

My father occasionally felt a little anxiety lest Sophia should develop a pernicious partiality for the platform; but he was, notwithstanding, proud of her success and extremely thankful that she had been able to make such an effective beginning of her Church Defence work. This is shown in the following reply to a latter received by him from Sir Walter Farquhar (a Vice-President of the Church Defence Association) :—

The Earl of Selborne to Sir Walter Farquhar.

"Blackmoor, Petersfield,
"January 31, 1895.

"Your approval of my daughter's efforts to serve the Church (a duty not self-assumed, but committed to her as diocesan lady-secretary by our Bishop), cannot but be gratifying to me. She is indefatigable in the work; and I am not without hope that she has been enabled to do real good. We live in strange times; when the Prime Minister,* and several of his colleagues go to and fro through the country, trying

* The Earl of Rosebery.

to stir up revolution, without (certainly) any initiative from the people generally, or even much response to the invitation. I trust that, by God's mercy, we may before long be delivered from such rulers, the like of whom were never before seen. It is, one may hope, propitious to the Defence of the Church, that most of our other institutions are, by the same hands, attacked all round. Lord Rosebery seems to take his facts, as to Church history in this country, from the Papists ; but *facts* are at a discount, altogether, with these men. The saddest thing of all, to you and me, must be, that for all this the person most responsible is Gladstone."

The spring of 1893 was spent by my father and sister in London.

Sophia to The Lady Laura Ridding.

"30, Portland Place,
"March 16, 1893.

"Father keeps very well. He enjoyed last night at the Salisburys very much. I am keeping Lent only in one way at all successfully. I am practising a sort of charity by assiduous attentions to seven old people, Lady C—, A. M—, Miss P—, Mr T. H—, Lady C. H—, Mrs B—, and C. M. C—. The three latter I only visit about once a week, but Miss P— and Mr H— I really do like a district, and Lady C— like the Girls' Friendly Society on its most developed side ! that and Mothers' Union together. A. M— I have had to dinner and luncheon and drives, but as these things are never remembered I am keeping a diary to show next time I hear of her 'not seeing anything of us' ! I went to Lambeth to the Archbishop's* Bible reading yesterday. It was crammed—chiefly South Kensington with a glimmer of smart worldlings. The Archbishop was capital in the end part and summed up well, but when he gets on the romantic lines I yawn. I was there at five and not a cranny of room, so I and others knelt at the Altar rails, and

* Archbishop Benson.

I liked that. It was rather dark, and when one said one's prayers (we use the fifty-first Psalm always) it was blessed and one was away from every one, only the voices and music behind and the darkness round and nothing in front. I would like always to be there. I am going Wednesdays to Mrs Dugdale to read Dante with Maysie Compton, Lady Helen Ferguson and Mrs Paul which I may like. Read Kenan's 'Siberia.' This is a very *ego* letter, but you say you don't know our movements, so I've told you mine!"

From this time to his last illness my father was incessantly occupied in serving the causes which he had so deeply at heart by correspondence, by articles in the Press, by speeches in the House of Laymen and in Parliament and occasionally at public meetings. I remember vividly two of these meetings. They were both held in London as meetings of protest against the Welsh Suspensory Bill.

The earlier of them took place on April 24, 1893, in St James' Hall. My father was its chairman, and we, his daughters, watched the proceedings from the gallery. Even before the meeting began, we saw ominous signs below. These quickly developed into a hideous scene of disorder, engineered by the Church's enemies, and carried out by two hundred and sixty drunken wreckers, introduced into the hall by forged tickets. These men pushed their way among the audience, brandishing heavy sticks; they drowned the hymn with hoots and ribald songs, they howled down my father with cat-calls, jeers and screams, and succeeded in breaking up the meeting with their rowdyism. The resolution was put and carried in dumb show; and then, to our intense relief, my father's supporters succeeded in getting him safely away. As he stood on the platform, an old man of eighty, he looked like an angel trying patiently to restrain a surging gang of ruffians. Sophia's blazing wrath was only appeased when she

was assured that my father was none the worse for the cruel strain on his voice of attempting to make himself heard above the bellowing roars.

The second meeting, held three weeks later, brought her consolation. It took place in the Albert Hall, with an enthusiastic audience of ten thousand. They gave a splendid reception to my father, and he made a wonderful speech, which was heard throughout the huge building.

On September 7, my father made his last great speech, but between these dates occurred an episode which brought interest and diversion to Sophia. At the invitation of the University of Dublin, my father, accompanied by her, went to Dublin, on June 28, to receive the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Civil Law, conferred in appreciation of his national services. They were the guests of the zealous Unionist, Dr Salmon, Provost of Trinity College, who, Sophia believed, was serenely unconscious of the factions which divided his household. While she, downstairs, spent her days in listening to the denunciations of the National League from her host and his friends, her maid, Mrs Smith, a sturdy Englishwoman, upstairs, was driven to distraction by the housemaids' obsession by the prospects of Home Rule. They were so entirely occupied in the contemplation of the rosy mirage that they could spare no minutes to make the beds or perform any of the usual duties in the guests' bedrooms. Mrs Smith was subjected to an endless torrent of rhapsodies on the coming Millennium. "It will be a grand time indeed!" crowed the Irish housemaid, "for every one will have everything that belongs to everybody else!"

"I said to her," said the indignant Mrs Smith, in relating the conversation to her mistress: "But what will happen to everybody else?" and the silly creature answered: "Sure! they will keep their own too!"

Sophia's humorous appreciation of the situation

did not prevent her feeling somewhat relieved when this embarrassing condition of things ended with their departure from Dublin.

Of all her father's speeches, I think Sophia gloried most in the triumph of his last great speech in the House of Lords. It was delivered on September 7, 1893, on the occasion of the second reading of the Government of Ireland Bill, and was a powerful protest against the anomalous proposals of the Cabinet, and their absolute abandonment of the "Cardinal principle of Imperial Supremacy." It lasted one hour and forty minutes. Those who heard it praised it as remarkable for "its brilliancy and overpowering force and subtlety, and its close and cogent reasoning," while we, his immediate circle, knew it to be remarkable in a supreme degree as a marvellous feat of memory. My father had prepared it most carefully, and had made copious notes of figures, quotations and facts. Shortly before the debate, he left the bag containing all his notes in a cab, and discovered his loss too late to retrieve it. He spoke therefore without a single note, relying entirely on his memory.

One other special incident among those which I treasure of his last days may be recorded here. It was during the New Year festivities of 1895, when we were all at Blackmoor, children and grandchildren. Sophia was dispensing tea in the large central hall, and we were gathered in little groups while the children were playing games at the further end. My father was seated at the table; and Top, a seven-year-old child, given to occasional moods of dreamy abstraction or vehement activity, was standing beside his chair. Some remark about the snow outside set the little boy's mind working, and he repeated aloud the beginning of Shelley's poem—

"Arethusa arose
From her couch of snows
In the Acroceraunian mountains . . ."

He knew the verses by heart, and delighted in the rhythm and swing. We saw my father's face lighten with pleasure at the child's appreciation, for he, too, knew and loved the poem. He helped the stumbling little tongue over "Acroceraunian"; and the two eagerly repeated the whole poem together, racing through the pursuit, their heads touching each other, their eyes sparkling (my father's were as bright a blue as the veronica), and a shining smile of innocent purity irradiating both faces. The pathos and beauty of the group moved me to look across to Sophia, and our eyes met. Afterwards she said to me: "I don't believe anybody but you and I saw it, but it was almost too much for me!"

I think it reminded her of a remark that Lord Tennyson (who had died two years before) had once made to her on the lines from his "Ode to the Duke of Wellington":—

"And as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime,"

he said, "To your father only in the present time do these lines apply."

We had a delightful time all together during those wintry days at Blackmoor; and my husband and I went back to the Midlands, leaving Sophia preparing to resume her Church Defence Campaign, and my father feeling well and vigorous. In February, however, he had an attack of influenza, which hung about him until Easter, seriously undermining his strength. Then, in the glorious sunshine of the perfect spring of 1895, he felt a return of vigour and believed that he had entirely recovered. In the midst of this enjoyment of a consciousness of renewed health, he took a fresh chill, which rapidly developed into gastritis and heart failure. He died on May 4, a fortnight after the day on which he had told Sophia that he felt as if he had taken a new lease of life, in which he believed he would yet be spared

for some years to do more work; for, said he: "There is much I should wish to do if it be God's will." With the exception of my brother, who had been summoned to his Militia duties, we were all with my father when he died. On the 8th, amid signs of a nation's mourning, we laid our father's body next to our mother's in Blackmoor Churchyard. Great crowds stood around the grave, his friends, his tenants, with the representative of the Queen, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Salisbury, several Bishops and representatives from the House of Lords, the Bench, the Bar, the Universities, the House of Laymen, the Mercers' Company and various other great bodies to which he belonged. The *Te Deum*, sung at the end of the service, expressed the thankfulness, which all who stood there felt, for the noble life laid down full of grace and years. It was, as the Archbishop called it, "an hour of conquering hope."

*Sophia to The Lord Stanmore.**

"Blackmoor,
"May 6, 1895.

"Thank you for your letter. Yes, my heart faints within me; but I do want to be good, and surely God will help me? It would be so mean and ungrateful of me not to, when I can never thank Him for the honour of my life and the enriching, which nothing can take from me, which I have, though just now I can only feel outside and very empty. For if we, by God's grace, keep true and try to do His will as Father did, Father will be more and more to us, and not less, as indeed I have felt of Mother. Only how to go on and live and be bright and diligent?—but we *must*, as our duty to our parents not less than to God. And that, and that we may all keep close together to our ends, is what I now ask for; and that God's will may be perfected in each one of us and the children and all, that we may not be utterly unworthy of our Father and Mother. I, though very anxious, felt so

* Formerly Sir Arthur Gordon.

sure he would recover, and he looked just like himself ten minutes before he died. It was very sudden: his heart gave way. He was so well up to April 22. How he got a chill I don't really know. I feel it so difficult to understand why he died. Willie and Maud are so very, very dear; but, poor things, they too and each and all are utterly desolate."

The noble appreciation in the speeches in the House of Lords and in Convocation of the greatness of my father's character and of the national loss suffered in his death touched all our hearts and moved us by their testimony to his devoted service to his God, Church and country, to his disregard of worldly position and to his "austere simplicity of manner which recalled that of those great lawyers of the Middle Ages who were also great Churchmen." We valued deeply the recognition of his unique influence, his learning, talents and unexampled industry which filled the columns of newspapers of opposing political and religious views; as well as the large number of letters from mourners in every condition of life, from personal friends and entire strangers, from leaders of the nation and obscure working men. All these tokens of appreciation were treasured by Sophia as offerings at the shrine of her devotion.

In their sympathy with us all, our friends realized what a super-measure of their kindness was due to her in the desolation which was her sad portion in our loss. "Dear faithful daughter, whose loss is so much more for you to bear than it is for other daughters. Your father has been so entirely the first great object of your life, of your goings and comings, of all your loving care. How can you face life without him?" they asked. And we, of her family, echoed the question. For, as the first phase of exaltation and rejoicing over the holy consummation of my father's faithful life passed away, she became aware of a sense of supreme exhaustion and loss.

Occasionally, when suffering from over-tired nerves,

Sophia had in the last few years expressed a (probably very transient) desire "to go to bed and never get up," or "to retire into a cloister if she could take her books with her"; yet she had all the time been joyfully conscious that her life shone out from "a background of happiness made up of love and goodness and every interest and delight" up to this tragic Easter. No wonder, then, that she now felt the "hunger, wrench and bewilderment," not only of the devoted child who had lost her parent, but also of the disciple who had daily learnt from a great and noble mind full of teaching and strength, and of the comrade who felt that the perfect companionship and honour of sharing his thoughts and life had in themselves made a full and worthy life for her. Her whole soul had expanded securely in the warm encompassing sea of her father's love and wisdom; and now that this was no longer visibly around her, she felt as if she had suddenly drifted into unknown arctic regions of loneliness and darkness. Many of us have to float out into that lonely sea, but with her intense self-consciousness she felt as if she was there alone in her suffering, tossed hither and thither by its waves, "a wreckage left by the tide on the shore, outside all help and interpretation."

She wrote to an intimate friend on May 26, 1895—

"It seems, I see, strange, but though Father is eighty-two, he never seems old to me, and this came to me as a shock after all. I thought he would pull through. I do want to be good and not to be ungrateful, but I hardly know yet how to go on without him. I am so very, very hungry. It is having to do and live without his visible presence, without hearing him, which makes my heart faint in me. I feel starved. For with him God was in everything and not poked away in a back cupboard, and he gave me faith by his faith in God and in his fellow-men—but none of you can understand."

Also the inevitable changes made her miserable.

She spoke of them as "excruciating pain inflicted by the piece by piece uprooting. People are like places. As one gets older one loves people and places and values them, not only for themselves, but also for their accumulated fragrances and memories, so that to leave a place or lose a person means parting with immeasurably more than the actual square feet of earth or the one man or woman." And now the dear home which she loved so much in Portland Place was sold, and Blackmoor (on account of the death duties) was let to strangers for two years. New ways were introduced; old customs, furniture, paths, arrangements dispensed with or altered. It took my sister five years to realize that such things must be, if each generation is to express itself really. In 1900 she wrote to me—

"I have come to see (what any less fool would have seen before!) that sepulchres are not God's plan; and all expression, however beautiful, becomes a sepulchre when it is not the living expression of a life or mind; and that, in time, only good will come to Blackmoor and its people through the changed expressions of (in its own way) quite as living a life and true a faith as that of our blessed Father and Mother."

In 1895, Sophia had not yet learnt this lesson; and things inanimate were still for her "invested with a borrowed life, friends or enemies, home or prison, the gates of paradise or hell itself." And now that those gates were, for the time, closed against her, she could not bring herself to face building up any happiness outside the walls of Blackmoor. She waited.

My husband and I had planned to take a short holiday in June, and we persuaded my sister to go with us to Siena. She felt an aching comfort in showing us the glories of its cathedral, and all the beautiful sacred places which she and my father had

visited in 1885. She went from thence to the mountain hotel at Piora, where he had revelled in the glowing splendour of the Alpine flowers, and there she had a week alone before we joined her. She wrote from there on July 17—

“I do not mind being here alone at all. Other people are not him and can’t be; and it rests being alone with nature and God; and it feels as if every moment I must see *Them*. But still the ache is terrible, and the more beautiful things are, and the more one has reason to be satisfied as to the Parliamentary Elections at home, the more I miss him.”

In August Sophia returned to England. She wrote to me on the 9th—

“I am really glad I went abroad, and I am sure that physically I am all the better for it, and as one’s body is either an extra burden or a lever to one’s inside, that is very important. I am sure had I not gone abroad, seeing people would have driven me crazy. As it is, I am going to Oxford to be alone again. I really am not fit for unbrokenly being with people yet; and you and George were so good, so very understanding, in leaving me alone and absolutely free and yet always giving me the feeling of your love and the warmth of your presence. You see it’s just like going on and on to a point on the narrow edge of a mountain. I felt several times if I let myself stop and look over, I should go; and only by going steadily on and on was I safe; and so I am as to my life at present. It is not that, in the ordinary sense of the word, I am lonely. I am not—indeed I get on best by being a great deal alone—for nobody ever had more kindness and love all round them than I have always had and have. It is only my exceeding want of Father, and I miss Mother too more than ever I did, though I should have thought that impossible. Father always made Mother feel so near; and then, what in my poor little egotism for a time cost me heavily, giving up my own life and pursuits and things, had at last become no sacrifice; and I learnt, as I could have learnt no other way, the true

value and dignity of life and how entirely it depends on losing, as our Lord says; but of course one can't have one's life that had become a joy and filled to overflowing with Father's presence, and hers too, suddenly cut off, and *not* be in pain and bewildered and starved and very wretched as a background."

And so began her life at Oxford. She had made an attempt to rent a little house at Oakhanger, the Blackmoor hamlet on the forest, but the attempt had failed; and both my brother and his wife urged most earnestly on her their great desire that she should make her home with them. But a train of events seemed to her to point to Oxford as the place where her presence was most needed. Accordingly she went there on her return from abroad, to take temporary charge (during the absence of our uncle and aunt, Archdeacon and Mrs Edwin Palmer) of our Aunt Pem, the Mother Emily of St Cyprian's Sisterhood in Marylebone.* For twenty-six years Pem had done noble service there, but she was now stricken down with paralysis and heart disease; and she had come to Oxford, helpless and dying, to end her days under our uncle's roof. All who entered the sanctuary of her sick-room felt the truth of my father's description of her as "an angel on earth, who, if human being can be, is certainly fit for the company of angels and happy saints."

Sophia loved her passionately; and when in October, five months after our father's death, our uncle, the Archdeacon, was taken from us after a few days' illness, she felt a clear conviction that it was God's will that she should live on in Oxford to help minister to our Aunt Pem until the expected release of death came also to her.

"It comes to this," wrote Sophia from Oxford on October 26, 1895. "While Pem lives, my actual home is here; and in this I see God's training. I don't

* Emily Palmer, my father's youngest sister.

practically feel always (though much at times) that we are dwellers in tents. Ever my great help is the knowing Father is pleased. Such a state of things (her living, his dying) never entered into my mind; and when it came, that night—almost as if I heard some one speak as words outside myself—came the thought: 'This is your work!'

Contrary to the medical prognosis, Mother Emily lived on for eleven years, her body bedridden and half dead, her soul serenely active in perfect peace, happiness and communion with God.

For four years Sophia made her head-quarters with the aunts; afterwards she rented a house of her own in Oxford. Although there were many mitigations which eased the discipline, the life at Oxford was never congenial to her. The dull routine, the regular hours, the old-fashioned customs to which she had to conform, made living in another person's house very trying to her. "It strikes me as a great testimony to her real humility and loving nature that she bore contentedly with a life, in which she was not even second fiddle, in our tiny house," said one of my cousins in looking back on these years. While living with my aunts, Sophia divided her days between daily services and Communions at St Mary the Virgin; several hours spent by Pem's bedside; her work of editing my father's Memoirs for publication; recreation with her band of friends; and occasional religious work, such as a Bible Class started by her for the little servants belonging to the University lodging-houses in St Mary's parish, and taking other classes for my aunt or cousins when they were absent from home. In Term-time she regularly attended the University Sermons.

The following letter reveals the oppression felt by Sophia in the unfamiliar atmosphere of her new surroundings. It always seemed to us as if she felt like an abdicated queen living in exile; and the resemblance was heightened by the fact that at this

time her dearest friends were, as one of our family described them, "All Ex-Cabinet Ministers, Ex-Ambassadors, or Ex-Colonial Governors"—

Sophia to The Lord Stanmore.

"Oxford,

"August 17, 1895.

"Thank you for your welcoming letter. It was good of you to think of it, and it really helped me: it was so understanding. I suppose no two people feel or experience alike; the fact that colour, light, and sound all are relative degrees of perfection and appreciation, explains what in childhood was to me a matter of perplexity and indignation, and which only lessens as years beat one, and one slowly and stupidly perceives that 'it is not their fault exactly'; and then one even comes to conceive the possibility that one's own point of sight is not *the* one and only point of sight, and that to others one may be a mute or a deaf, or mad or, at least, queer! I often thought abroad, when I walked with patois peasants, how like life it was; and that, as I felt a cheerful congratulation over the glimpses of meaning I occasionally stumbled on, so really one should be grateful for the proportion of mutual intelligence we met with in this world. And just as I found that, when I asked a direct question as to a place, thing, etc. (like a conversation lesson in a grammar), we got on swimmingly, but when they discoursed to me on and on, or when I tried to learn something of their lives and thoughts, our limitations confronted us—so it is in life. Three hundred and sixty-four days of one's life there is enough to get on with; but there comes a three hundred and sixty-fifth, when it is no longer bread and cheese, and dinner and work, and 'how d'ye do?' and then one realizes how alone each soul is. And about death: I have felt, in my special experiences, how utterly (to me) all that is written and said is unreal. But, after all, how could it be otherwise? I am glad I came here. I have been everywhere with my Father for ten years, so everywhere I must begin without him; and there is a peace in

Oxford out of term time, the same feeling in a way I had in Siena: the old life and lives lived, a sense of witness of continuity, without the weariness to jar of a hustling, noisy, ugly town life. I go to Mattins and Evensong at St Mary's, because I am sure it's good for me, and I found before the health and strength of it and daily Communions; indeed they carry me through when I am numb and sick inside and can only hold on."

From Oxford Sophia took little hurried flights to London, where she would swoop down on the East End Missions of the Parochial Mission Women, or visit certain of her most intimate friends and relations. She used to say that she had more than thirty hostesses eager to house her in London. She also stayed in various Hampshire country houses, from which she would carry on her Church Defence Campaign in Winchester Diocese, paying occasional visits to her beloved Blackmoor cottagers, who felt very forlorn during the tenancy by strangers of our Blackmoor home.

One day she went to call on an old man, John Hole, who was ill in bed, and had not seen her since my father's death. This is her account of the visit—

"He called out: 'Who be ye? Lady Sophia! Never!' clutches me, pulls me down and stares at me. 'Lord! you be changed! Shouldn't a' known yer till you spoke; and now I sees you with yer old jaunty ways I knows you. But you be changed—and that thin and starved. Ah well! times I've said 'How she'll be wanting her father, they was allus together"—and now I sees it in you: starved like!' Then as I sat by him, he patted me like a baby, and said: 'No offence, my dear, but if you have lost your looks, bless you, I don't mind! It's a sight for sore eyes to see you, and now I studies yer, yer eyes is the same and yer heart in them, and that's enough for me; and'—pausing—'I'm thinking you be one as trouble may wear and wear and wear to nigh to pieces, but you be stronger nor he, and you'll wear through

trouble and come through he and beat he ; mark my words ! ”

“ Starved like,” the old man called her, and he spoke truly. The craving for the supreme affection of one person, which had possessed Sophia all her life, but which hitherto had remained pacified, was now raging within her like an unappeasable hunger. She called it “ her heart feelers wanting something to claw at ! ” Such craving has much that is elemental about it. It has always been one of the marks of emotional saints, and in her it made for saintship, as nothing but the Love of God could satisfy such a hungry soul. She felt, too, that through it God taught her a much-needed lesson of detachment. “ Nothing but God smashing and stripping me could have prepared me to hear and see the other life until it became so natural that now it is more real than this,” she confessed many years afterwards.

On the mingled torment and relief experienced by all whom death has separated from those they love, torment from the pangs of joy apart from them, relief from the belief that they are no longer troubled by our perplexities and sorrows, she said—

“ Perhaps we are wrong both ways. I think they must know and be glad even more than we are, and feel our troubles with the difference of a new and great experience, some way like our joy and sorrow for little children’s joys and woes. When ours are happy, their enjoyment thrills me with a joy of my own ; and all the more because I have learnt how precious joy is. Every trouble of theirs goes into one’s soul, for all the still half-hidden meaning of sorrow to them and the fact that they will soon forget it more or less, to remember, perhaps, in different proportions and even with a smile, in years to come. So, I fancy, it may be in a greater and grander degree as to us and those to whom God has given, and is giving, knowledge and experience we have not yet come to.”

To a friend passing through the same agony of loss, Sophia wrote out of the depths of her own experience—

“The emancipation into further life of those we love while we are still working out our time here, means a rending which is agony to us. It does not mean separation from love; it does mean a suspension of its tangible expression, on our side, in giving and receiving. And it is these changed conditions of our fellowship which are for the time agony, and always give to us, while in this world, the experience of hunger which is pain. But as the days and days go on, though time never heals the hunger, never can do that which depends on reunion—time, working by love, does heal the outer skin and lessen the agony of outside touches. Above all, we learn gradually the revelations of the changed conditions of our fellowship and love; and one day we find suddenly we are realizing this fellowship in a new way.”

While this initiation was proceeding in her soul, her body was mercilessly overdriven by her. Nobody now had the power of restraining her. In her anxiety to preserve certain evening hours unbroken for her daily visit to Pem’s sick-room, which they both valued deeply, she would compress much too much work into far too few days, hurrying back to Oxford in a state of collapse.

She was indefatigable in her Church Defence work. In correspondence with Miss Florence Wyndham, one of her devoted fellow-workers in Winchester Diocese, she described one of her spring expeditions in 1896—

“I will chronicle my doings since I wrote in March. After I left Ascot I went to Claremont and Bookham for Church Defence, and then returned to Oxford for three weeks. Then I went another Church Defence round in North Hants, and ended by a night at home for our Blackmoor Church Defence

Annual Meeting. It was rather a nightmare to me. I felt like a sleep-walker, and everybody said everything was going wrong. From Coldhayes I did Clanfield and Hambledon, Clanfield in the worst of weather. Stonor Hill was covered with masses of chalk bowled down by the storms and rain, and the village was knee-deep in rain and chalk soup! and yet the schoolroom was full, and a most appreciative audience too. I had a Central Church Committee Meeting at Godalming in Easter week. After that I ran up many a time for a night to London because of my Parochial Mission Women work and Church Defence. I do sigh (inside) after my village, and sometimes the devil floors me! Sometimes I feel my life on the loose *almost* unbearable. I know the village is my gift."

Again in the autumn of 1898 she wrote to her friend—

" My very dear girl, I want your opinion. I was just going to arrange for speaking once each at Invitation Meetings for Organizers (not at Public Meetings) in these deaneries: Basingstoke, Silchester, Stockbridge, from Laverstoke. There is no other way of keeping the thought and need of this work before these people. I must somehow go on at those deaneries until something roots there. I can't go round and talk to each parish and incumbent as I should prefer to do. Also I can think of no way as to Portsmouth but an Invitation Meeting. . . . If you knew how I have again and again explained the work, and clergy and laity seemed to understand! you would doubt (as I do) if they really are honest in seeming never to have understood or not to know. As the Archbishop said: 'We must grind at it.' 'Until we saturate the ground' was another of his figures. Your work is such a strength to me."

One instance of my sister's characteristic course of action may be recorded here. She had made an engagement to speak at a Church Defence Meeting at the Church Congress held at Shrewsbury in 1896. On the previous day she addressed two meetings at

Cowes in the Isle of Wight, having, with her usual defiance of geography, arranged to take that visit *en route* for Shrewsbury. My husband and I were also attending the Church Congress, and we were startled at her condition of exhaustion when she arrived in the course of the afternoon. Such a condition was intelligible when she explained to us that she had started from Cowes at seven that morning, that she had rushed across London to Paddington Station, where, as the train began to move, a strange woman flung the carriage door open, thrust a baby into her arms, and shouted out: "It will be met at Birmingham!" that she had nursed the foundling in her lap, crooning lullabies to it without ceasing for more than two hours, and that she had reached Birmingham tired and apprehensive. To her intense relief a man stepped forward and claimed the baby. After another hour and a half's journey, she arrived at Shrewsbury in a raging storm of wind and rain, where she went on to the platform and made a weighty, admirable speech within three-quarters of an hour after her arrival!

It was not wonderful that such adventures resulted in serious overstrain of body and nerve.

When the first two volumes of my father's Memoirs were published in July, 1896, Lady Layard insisted on their editor coming to her to Italy for a short rest. Sophia and she spent two months together, dividing the time between Lady Layard's house in Venice, the Villa Mier at Belluno, and a short visit to a friend of Lady Layard's, the Contessa Pisani at Vescovana, near Este. This lady was full of admiration for Sophia's goodness and ability, and conferred on her the name of "St Catharine of Siena." This was an unrivalled dignity in my sister's eyes, for she loved St Catharine with special devotion and believed that her holy presence often overshadowed her in her loneliness. When we were in Siena together, she was always happy in wandering through

the streets and places which once were trodden by the Saint's feet.

"It's wonderful," Sophia said, "that St Francis died in 1282 and St Catharine in 1380, and all this time gone by since their prayer and work of reform and evangelizing; and in many ways only lately the outward answers have come. Despite all, they would be happier now and most thankful as to the awakening and purifying. How I wish I was like St Catharine!"

Sophia to Miss Ella Anson.

"Villa Mier, Belluno,

"July 16, 1896.

"This is an old rambling villa with a big stone balcony looking to the Dolomites. All around are mountains, not cooping one in, but giving that feeling of strength and peace and even hope which mountains always give to me. To our N.E. are the Dolomites, jagged, queer, knotty and knobby, and sticking up in tooth and needle, and they seem to disappear behind the gracious flowing lines of the mountains facing us and behind Belluno, which flow away and away to the west and south. I am reading Gibbon again with immense enjoyment; and I have just finished Shakespeare's 'John,' 'Richard II.', and 'Henry IV.', and am going on with the older historical plays, but it's difficult to go on and not to reread and reread, only in this, as everything, I miss Father dreadfully. Lady Layard reads and enjoys it and we read to each other, but though she is a very talented woman and a delightful companion full of fun and freshness and very *simpatica* to me, yet in discussing real books, after Father, most people are so poor in their knowledge and insight and size of mind. He had attained that absolute strength and wisdom which is security and possession and perfect freedom. He never was afraid, never spoke or acted from opposition or caprice or fear of misapprehension. His mind and spirit, as I knew by closest companionship, was a proof of the perfect freedom of unreserved service. Do you understand how it's like wanting fresh air sometimes? Being here is excellent for me, and I

hope and pray when I return to Oxford life, I shall be fit for a new start, and big enough not to be so little as to chafe at all at things which do not matter."

Sophia to Miss Ella Anson.

"Villa Mier, Belluno,
"July 27, 1896.

"I am now in volume four of Gibbon and still, of course, enjoy it, but I am rather sick of blood and crime and his pomposity and sneers; still it's genius: he leaves such pictures, and through all the confusions of people and races and parties, the subject marches on, an awful Nemesis, and clears them into their places and groups and judgment with extraordinary distinctness. I don't know how. His style is often so involved and long-winded, and he seems, as you read, so confused in his treatment."

Sophia to The Lady Laura Riddings.

"Villa Mier, Belluno,
"August 14, 1896.

"Thank you for your letters. The weather at last is ideal, brilliantly luminous, very warm in a clean, honest manner all day and cool nights, and the lights on the mountains most lovely. Life is now an enjoyment. The whole of this very broad valley-plateau is tropical in vegetation and there are no dividing lines like in our fields, but great stretches of maize, chicory, rape, and miles of orchards and vineyards, plums, nectarines, small and sourish. Althea frutex in blossom, in clumps and low hedges, makes occasional divisions; but all the ground is up and down, and the whole effect is most lovely, and the mountains are superb. Lady Layard and I went for three days to a place beyond Este, very low, not beautiful county; but the garden at Vescovana, this place of Contessa Pisani, was intoxicating in its tropical beauty. Imagine crimson roses in masses all in and out and up Negundo Maples falling down in magnificent festoons, and scarlet bignonia among copper beeches, and every sort of clematis and passion flower, plumbago and lots I don't know, throwing

themselves away over shrubs and trees ; and what they call pink crèpe, most beautiful, from a distance like our May-trees. Such a lovely blossom and mass of colour. She has done her vistas and perspectives admirably, and her flower-beds are so successful. She is a very clever widow of sixty-five, living alone ; the old priest Don Antonio dines every night. Contessa Pisani manages seventeen farms, and all the time we were there she was out at 6 a.m., in at 10, and again out till noon, then she smoked and talked after lunch till two, when we siestaed and met again at four for tea, water-melon and liqueurs ; then we were out till eight, visiting farm after farm in her landau. The coachman hopped off the box to join in discussions, and there he stood, hat in hand, backing the Countess and advising the different bailiffs. (I thought of Golder and Stevens !)* and everybody put in a word ; and everybody in excellent temper tried to deceive and cheat ! and everybody admired and agreed when a missing sack was found ; or corn, not thoroughly dried, turned out again ; or a sore on a beast, which had no right to be there, was washed and anointed ; and so on ; and all and only because she would not give way and stuck to her word and her will. It was one comedy after another. I did enjoy it ! And all the white oxen knew her. Seventeen stables, and twenty-five to thirty-six in each ! And at every threshing-floor she sat in judgment on men and women and things ; and the threshing and harvesting and glean- ing all was one picture after another. Then the market under the trees on the village green ; the ménage and its manners and the luxury and simplicity in the huge villa (like a large country house), all was most interesting. And our hostess, with Shakespeare and Virgil at every turn, knowing Shakespeare in and out, every word and person ; and Virgil she continually quoted and translated. Her mind is full of art and politics and nations and humour and all literature, present and past. Her reading is extraordinary. She was left a widow fifteen years ago, and she took up the duty of seeing to the property and worked it so well that there are no debts and it pays. She used to read a great deal before, but now she says she does

* Our family coachman and the Blackmoor bailiff.

all her reading from December to March, and the rest of the year only evenings and a little besides. She looks very Italian, but her mother was American, her father Dutch Van-Miligan ; her grandmother, French, and her great-grandmother, English. She speaks English very well, but not so well as French or Italian. She was brought up in Rome. She said to me: 'Your father is my Sir Thomas More. I have read everything he has said for many years ; and when they said that Sir Thomas More was the last good Englishman, I said, "No ! I have another Sir Thomas More. He is Lord Selborne !"' . . . Love to all. S. M. P."

This comparison was always a joy to Sophia. She had been struck by it many years before when she visited the Exhibition of Tudor portraits held in London in the spring of 1890. The portraits of Sir Thomas More impressed her imagination.

"He is given two or three times," she said, "but one, a profile to the right, is exactly my idea of the man. Sensitive, tender-hearted, conscientious, intellectual, a true gentleman : with great power of enduring and of patience and of walking through his world of rude force, injustice and wrong, of violence, greed and self-indulgence, with a clean soul and full of mercy and pity for others. I fancy he was like my Father ; Justice, Truth and Mercy."

CHAPTER VIII

1896—1903

(AGE : FORTY-THREE TO FIFTY)

SOPHIA returned to England soothed by her glimpses of rural life as described in the *Georgics* and by the beauty and colour in which her tired spirit had steeped itself; but she had hardly landed before she again flung herself into a vortex of work. Remonstrances were useless. Lord Stanmore, who used to reproach her with her criminal neglect of "God's call to idleness, to which she owed equal obedience as to His call to laboriousness," made short work of her assertion that in Italy she had rested in absolute idleness. "Your idleness," he assured her, "means an amount of business sufficient for three ordinary women." He rallied her on "attempting to do the work of ten women and a dozen men." She laughed at his reproaches, she assured us that she hated her life of ceaseless movement, "but a dreadful little text is on my table which Edith Pemberton gave me: 'Here we have no continuing city,' and: 'Arise ye and depart, this is not your rest,' so I must go, but sometimes one would like to stop a little." Accordingly on she went, mostly in peregrinations on behalf of her Church Defence work.

Sophia to The Lord Stanmore.

"October 29, 1896.

"I am off to the Isle of Wight for a Church Defence campaign, to finish it. I had to leave one side of the Island undone as the Church Congress

interrupted me. Then on November 10, after the Winchester Diocesan Conference, we settle winter work with Ruridecanal Secretaries. My broken life is, no doubt, not actually much more so as to travelling than it has been ever since I left the schoolroom. Our dear old Nurse Meme used to say: 'We live on the line!' but living with Father and Mother made the home and the consecutiveness, and I had my own brimming-over life of works and interests. I get so interested in people and places, and if I can devote myself to anything it so fills me, that very soon there is no sacrifice, and so only this kind of life could ever be a permanent trial! and even that not really when I am well. I get so much enjoyment and interest out of everything, and I have so many to love everywhere that I really am an uncommonly lucky woman. Nothing is instead of anything else, and until I am with Father again, I shall go hungry. . . .

"My gnawing is that I could do much in villages and now never shall! and I am now squashing this viper, for, after all, service is the point and not the how or where. Father said that in everything the service must be paramount, and one cannot serve well if one is absorbed in oneself and if one does not throw oneself into the life around, which is going on."

Occasionally Sophia stayed in almost as many houses on a fourteen days' tour, frequently addressing two meetings in the day. Of course many of her visits were to personal friends, but she spared herself little time for intercourse with them, and they and we began to grow anxious on account of the unceasing drain upon her strength. Our anxiety was justified by her falling suddenly ill in January, 1897, but she refused to allow herself any longer pause than a rest-cure in absolute darkness for the space of three days. Then the restlessness, which was beginning to grow upon her, drove her forth again to take up her "broken-up life."

"I am sure in my better moments that it's all right," she declared. "But I hate living in shreds. If I were a penniless orphan, there would be no one

wanting me ; but as I would prefer and could have my own home, I am doomed to a vagrant's life."

Happily she still had the alleviation of real enjoyment from the keen interest which she always felt in persons and places and everything alike.

Some respite came to her in the first half of the year 1897, when she stayed for several weeks at a time with my youngest sister, and busied herself there in preparing the latter portion of my father's Memoirs for publication. Freda was in a very delicate condition of health and needed Sophia's care, so that the visits to Pem at Oxford were scantier at that time than Sophia liked.

"I have bleats from a bunch of old relations," she wrote to Miss Anson, "they hate Oxford and think me not needed by Pem : so I am going to fly round and make peace when I leave Freda. Every one thinks if you are not married you can have nothing to do and no limit to your strength, provided you don't 'unnecessarily, dear !' go near anybody but themselves! As soon as Freda's baby arrives I shall go into a Sisterhood, with a saving clause as regards going out when any one is very ill and going to Pem at regular intervals. A Retreat would be a revel, I feel ! Or I shall go to the desert !"

The birth of Freda's little son * on Queen Victoria's birthday, May 24, the Queen's desire that the child should bear her name, and his baptism in the week which followed the Diamond Jubilee in Henry the Seventh's Chapel in Westminster Abbey, were events of the greatest delight to Sophia, who was one of his Godparents.

If Sophia's experience as a family nurse in the case of Freda was happily pleasant, her next was of a very different character. On October 27, of the

* Victor Roundell George Biddulph. He was given a Commission in the Fifth Battalion of the Rifle Brigade in August, 1915, and was killed in fighting on the Somme on September 15, 1916.

following year, she had gone to my brother's London house, 49, Mount Street, on a flying visit and unexpectedly found herself detained there for an indefinite period of weeks. My sister-in-law was suddenly taken dangerously ill, and Sophia stayed on to help her and Willie through a long period of suspense and anxiety. When the crisis was passed she sought relief from the strain in weekly visits to St Margaret's House (the Women's Branch of the Oxford House Settlement) and to the Bethnal Green Workhouse. She declared afterwards that what saved her from breaking down was her persistence in the luxury of solitary walks back to Mount Street: "blessed walks," she called them, "real long soul, mind and body refreshing, eight or ten miles at a go!" She used to offer the same method of revigoration to her friends.

"Lunch here at a quarter to two!" she entreated her friend Miss Florence Wyndham, "and go with me to the Abbey at three and hear Canon Gore at 3.40 on the Epistle to the Romans. A cup of tea at Mrs Church or Mrs John Talbot (who are both close by) and then go with me to Bethnal Green: to St Margaret's House for solid food at 6.45 (leaving Westminster at 5.45); then to Bethnal Green Workhouse, close by St Margaret's, at 7.15, where I hold forth to the Able-bodied. After an hour in the Workhouse, return with me to the West. I am trying the Able-bodied men for the first time to-day. It's appalling!"

Another more ordinary source of refreshment was found by Sophia in her intercourse with her little niece and nephews. She used to discuss all Mabel's plans and occupations with her with unfailing pleasure. She appeared to Mabel to be thrilled by all these interests which were naturally very absorbing to the little girl, to be deliciously moved by all her childish ideas, interests, parties, clothes and friends. There was a joyous *camaraderie* between

all the children and Sophia which was fully appreciated by them and realized by her to be the most potent tonic for her "blue-devil" moods that she could obtain anywhere. She was the subject of many impertinent poems, which brought grins to her face and which she hoarded among her treasures. One of them thus described her—

" There is a young lady whose name
Begins with a great crooked S ;
On the platform at Church Defence Meetings
Well known is her splendid address !

" When she's present the party are silent,
For of language she has a good flow ;
Her friends listen in great admiration
As she tells them the things she don't know."

Sophia delighted in the little boys. They were at this time always happy, hungry, smudgy, interested, occupied, original. They talked in curiously lucid well-framed sentences and bubbled over with remarkable ideas that had their source in their own active brains. The infant Luly* at four years old asked his mother: "Mama, if God made us, who made the Germans?"

Bobby at eleven years old apologized to Sophia for being late for breakfast: "I was up, but I was meditating on Plato and why my trousers wouldn't fasten at the knee. The button was off!"

In later years Bobby said of her: "Sophy was the most intimate of all my aunts, as I have constant memories of her from the earliest times I can remember till she went to live in Oxford. I was always devoted to her and she had an almost uncanny power of reading my thoughts."

The twelve-year-old Top undertook to guide his aunt into the right paths of literature. He complained of her selection of newspapers. "You don't take in the right newspapers. You should have the *Daily*

* The Hon. William Jocelyn Lewis Palmer, born September 15, 1894.

Mail, Answers, Funny-Folks, instead of the *Times, Guardian* and *Spectator*. I wrote to the papers about the discussion, 'Should smoking be allowed in Theatres?' and signed my letter 'Organizer.'

Now, during Maud's convalescence, in intervals between correcting the final proof-sheets of my father's Memoirs, Sophia helped Top to write a thrilling story of adventures, which was entitled: "Greater than De Rougemont," (De Rougemont being the name of a traveller, whose experiences, just given to the world, had been recognized as fit to take their place beside those of the celebrated Baron Münchausen). Top determined to send the story to the editor of *Answers*, and wrote the following letter to accompany it:—

"Dear Sir, Me and my companion send you this story for your excellent paper *Answers*. The story is called: 'Greater than De Rougemont.' If you take it please arrange and name your terms, please write on a letter or on a post card to the Lady Sophia Palmer, 49, Mount Street, London. Please do not (if you except the story) put the name of the author.

"Your Reader, Wolmer."

How this letter was intercepted by "my companion" remains a mystery, but I fear that it never reached its destination.

In December, 1898, the final volume of my father's Memorials were published. They consisted altogether of four massive volumes, too massive for popular handling, but made so by my sister's insistence on the use of an extra large type for the convenience of aged readers. She had added a large collection of interesting letters, an appendix, and four pages of an exquisite Appreciation written by herself. The work on which she had busied herself for nearly four years was accomplished; and reward came to her in the praise of reviewers, and letters of gratitude from friends old and young. While the old enjoyed the

descriptions of the apostolic work of my grandfather at Mixbury, and the chronicle of my father's life at Oxford in the fiery days of the Tractarian Movement, and of his early experiences in the beginning of his legal and political career, the young received the Memoirs as "a most valuable contribution to the history of our time," as a record of "wonderful unity of character and life in victorious clearness," as "a book to do one good just as his presence in the house used to do." "Such numbers of people have written to thank me, strange kinds too," said Sophia, adding: "So Father's life and work still goes on."

Two of these letters may be given here.

Mr J. Henry Shorthouse to Sophia.

"Lansdowne, Edgbaston.

"Although I have not yet finished the first volume of your delightful present I am anxious to write a few lines in addition to my former letter of acknowledgment. I do not think I expressed my sense of the *splendid* nature of your gift. It is such a beautiful book! . . . My expectations of the intense personal interest and value are very much more than realized. I am quite at a loss to express what I feel on this part of the subject. It is not only that the matter, the opinions, the anecdotes, and historical facts, are of such intense interest and value: but that one is almost overwhelmed at the kindness and confidential benevolence which has allowed those who will value and appreciate the privilege so highly, to enter into such close intercourse with such a life and such a mind. I think your grandfather's character and letters seem to me most wonderful, almost surpassing what one fancies the sphere of humanity; and one very principal reason why I have got on comparatively slowly with the volume is that every line is so full of suggestion and of incentives to reflection, that it is impossible to read the pages quickly. It is very difficult to write without seeming to exaggerate, but, far otherwise, it is impossible for me to express my admiration and delight. You will have many grateful

letters from others in somewhat of the same strain, which will perhaps help you to understand what my feelings are better than I can do myself, but I am sure you will realize the sense of gratitude we all feel for, as I have said, the privilege of being admitted into such society and to such intimate, perfect and delightful confidence."

The Bishop of Southwell to Sophia.

"Thurgarton Priory, Southwell,
"Christmas, 1898.

"I hope you are like me at this time beginning to look about you and flap your wings. I have sat good parts of two days in my armchair with a good conscience and there read the Father's two volumes, in which I have been intensely interested and have seen nothing but what has given me real pleasure. Some day Gladstone's biographer will state his case, I suppose; but we, who left Gladstone even before the Father, and had been as devoted, could not have our case stated better as we felt it. I think the book has come out at the right time, not too soon or too late. The Father presents himself as personally and truly as his other subjects. I suppose no one would write an autobiography without self-consciousness enough both to analyze and remember. I don't think I have any idea what amount of selection or modeling fell to you in preparing the book, but I only hope you and the rest are as entirely satisfied as I am. I congratulate unreservedly."

Now that the strain and concentration of her editorial duties were relaxed, Sophia became acutely conscious of malaise and of an imperious need for alteration in the condition of her life. For three years her existence had resembled that of an unhappy plant, cramped in a pot too narrow to allow it to put forth fresh fibres and roots. Her difficulty lay in deciding on the form the alteration should take. Directly after the publication of the book she placed her dilemma before me—

"I feel from day to day so entirely on the loose and a pilgrim, that I never now look forward to anything, for everything has turned out differently to anything that ever occurred to me. I am so thankful I never knew how my life would go, for I could not have borne it in anticipation. As soon as I can be settled in a *pied-à-terre*, however little I may be in it, it will make all the difference to me mentally. Knowing it is there and my background fixed, I shall be all right; and apart from the actual wretchedness of living in one's boxes, no doubt a series of crises (with the squirrel-life in a cage going on almost straight on end), has been a big tax; whereas, had I been able to make my life among the poor, the help would have been enormous. I have had this sort of widowhood in as unhelping circumstances as could be imagined. Meanwhile Willie urges London and he also urges my doing Society, and I feel it so uncongenial. I feel my life *now* could and ought to be given to direct religious work; and it can be much more clearly so if I give up Society. I could go visits in holidays and always see my own people and any friends who cared to see me, but just live for religious work in Clerkenwell, or whichever bit of London is my spot, till I can do the country villages. But then Willie says I am wanted in Society, and for Religion's sake and the Church's he wants me to keep in touch and for the children's. He says my reasons are like those for taking the veil; but there has been, since I was seventeen, this hunger after the poor; and it's like a great call that will not leave me. I would rather, in Pem's life, be in Oxford, but it's true that I am not wanted for *work* there. Miss Skene says so. I must just wait and pray and I shall know. Florence Wyndham entirely knows my carings, she feels the same hunger for souls, but she says I am useful with Society lay-people."

Sophia had written a characteristic letter to Miss Wyndham some time before. In it she said—

"I do long for more power to love. To love selflessly, patiently, with no warpings or limitations and not to have one's power of love hindered by points of

character which jar or puzzle or even disappoint : to love, in fact, as Christ loves. The worst of me is, as to love, that I know and I can't help it, my sense of love for the Lord burns and grows by love for my humans ; and one reason (apart from my knowing how much the poor want friendship and from wanting to help our Lord's work among them), one reason why I wanted so much to live a whole life of such work was, that in that way I seem nearer our Lord and I can love Him better ; and this sort of broken life with no filling human thread is so draughty ! and lowers my spiritual vitality. . . . Still I have known exactly what you say, that one has learnt by suffering ; and that, at times in one's life, one found one had grown by leaps and bounds ; and I believe some day I shall find that I am the stronger and richer and better for this draughty broken life. When I feel how short life is and that I could do so-and-so if only I were free, I know the next moment what the true value of life and service is ; but I have (I blush !) a touch of Marie Bashkirtseff in me and I am very sorry for myself sometimes !"

Sophia also consulted other special friends, and they urged her not to forsake her own class. "Don't think your time in country houses is lost, for you do *rich* people so much good on your visits," Miss Scott had once said to her ; and this view was repeated in chorus by one friend after another.

Still she hesitated. Possibly, as a result of her disturbing uncertainty, Sophia began to conceive a great desire to join a Religious Community. She was also attracted to missionary work in Australia ; although, after a time, she became convinced that her vocation was not for either of these lines of service. But in all her perplexity, she was spared the embarrassment of any mundane considerations clamouring to be heard in the counsel of her decision. She shrank instinctively from any line of service which was polluted by showiness and fashion ; and never, throughout her life, would she handle its tainted wares. "It's so disgustingly vulgar," she would

exclaim. "Advertisement! advertisement! advertisement! I hope my eye is jaundiced. I am sure X— and Z— honestly think themselves called to make their light shine and to put it on the higher level in the very smartest of candlesticks! But when I think in contrast of the splendid lives lived and work done where somehow one does not feel the candlestick, I like that much best. Sometimes I feel so sickened by the advertising way of it all that I feel 'Never again will I work with any of them!' It's an odious trait of the age we live in."

After an unsuccessful attempt to find a suitable house in London (she revolted from all suggestion of flats), Sophia finally decided to remain in Oxford; and accordingly took the lease of 32, Beaumont Street, and moved into her new home at the end of 1899.

I am sure that my brother and his band of supporters were right in their view as to Sophia's duty. She had a special gift for helping men and women of her own class, and she appeared never to shrink from exercising it. When she was only sixteen years old, it had led her to urge on a beautiful girl friend, slightly older than herself, God's call to her to use her great beauty as a righteous influence. She poured out to her her own intense feeling about religion; and as her friend received the words in chilling silence, Sophia had cried passionately: "I don't believe you care a bit about God!" Her tragic indignation left an impression on the other girl's mind never after obliterated.

She had a great attraction for young girls. The names of a number of them come to my mind and the adoring love with which they regarded her. "I want you to know what a blessing it was to be with you," wrote one whom she visited on her Church Defence work, "and to feel your goodness and sweetness and the power of your sanctified life." Another said to her after passing through a spiritual crisis:

"You do not know how often your faith and your words helped me in what I think may truly be called the hour of the power of darkness. God bless you and return a hundred-fold to you all that you have been to me."

All her later life Sophia was inspired by this missionary spirit. "God has put us in Society," she once said, "and it is He who has given us these lives to live, so they must be livable as religious lives." The mystical element in her character made her very regardless of superficial differences in other men and women. She found herself instinctively in touch with all sorts of different minds if they were really religious or if they had a yearning towards religion, however elementary or distorted their views might be.

Her letters brim over with tender appreciation of men and women who attracted her. She writes of an American friend who held opposing views to hers on many of her strongest religious convictions: "'So *bold*, so *schön*, so *rein*,' that is she! She always looks as if she had just risen from her knees with the peace of God always in her heart and an untouched child's innocence and freshness, a sort of dew, about her which is lovely."

Of another who seemed torn between Christian and pagan tendencies: "I shall always be glad I was thrown with her a little more last year. She is one of those people whom I think of with a bodily feeling; I now feel I have touched her finger-tips and maybe, in the next life, I shall do a little more."

Of two friends with whom she was in complete theological agreement: "Lord H—— is one of those whom to be with seems to bring one nearer to our Lord."

"If I never saw A—— G—— again in this world, it would make no barrier. I am not like that. Any one whom I really know and love, I always love; indeed I can't see how it can be otherwise where love exists, for it is oneself, it is life."

"I feel there is an unlimited amount of room in one for people and for very strong affections. I like that old Saint's words that 'for every guest thy heart receiveth, the Lord Himself doth open in thy heart another room !'" was another of her sayings.

This tremendous interest in other people through helping them, building up their devastated or broken lives, arranging their future for them on what she imagined would be the best and happiest lines, became a veritable passion with her in the days of which I am writing. Certainly the spiritual help which she was enabled to bring to a great variety of stricken or suffering lives was very wonderful. Lorn widows and orphans, bereaved mothers, daughters thwarted in their ambitions or vocations, men and women tormented by moods of restless dissatisfaction with life and doubting the existence of a merciful God, sufferers stricken with incurable complaints or mortal disease—to all these differing burden-bearers she seemed to have been given a special mission of consolation.

"When I am with any one afflicted anyhow," she explained to a friend, "I never see their 'bright side' (and how horrid even the word *bright* becomes in this use!). I only feel going blind, bed-ridden or lovesick, or whatever it may be; and though I fear I may be of no sort of spiritual or moral use, I know I am a comfort and much pleasanter! That's really why my old ladies here and at Oxford love me so inconveniently and two people near here, martyrs to arthritis, simply adore me (this is quite inadequate to express their feelings for me!) because I am so full of their miseries. Every one but me tried to cheer by pointing out 'bright sides.' Of course I have never had anything to bear, but I have been internally soured during the last four years by meddling people volunteering how thankful I ought to be for everything which I specially disliked or have found very difficult to bear; so I feel very strongly about it."

The little grey book which she published anonymously in 1902,* gives the secret of her healing power in the opening words of its last chapter.

“A heart of compassion—that is, a heart to feel *with*, not merely a heart to feel *for*, others. Love is wholly different in its effect, sympathy becomes divine, kindness exquisite and enlightened, when the source is a Heart of Compassion.”

That heart was hers; and by it she worked wonders.

In the summer of 1899, Sophia again visited Italy in the company of a girl relation. Her over-tired and depressed condition made her morbidly conscious of the inevitable shortcoming of the companionship of an immature young girl, unfamiliar with the learning and art of Italy, compared with that of my father.

Sophia to The Lady Laura Ridding.

“Rome,
“September, 21, 1899.

“W—— is a capital traveller and very happy. She loves the Corso and really appreciates landscape and view, but alas! though she is radiant here and very sorry to go, it is Rome of United Italy with lifts and electric lights she likes. She is honesty itself. I suppress all my enthusiasm and say to myself: ‘It’s only tastes differ.’ Really had Conradin been my director instead of Elizabeth’s he could not have contrived more subtle discipline than falls to my lot with one after another: it’s not the luxury of a hair-shirt and flail business, it’s all in comfort and pleasures! but never, hardly, able to do what you like (though I always can like what I do) or let your own nature go or be or live. I had such a glorious ten days here in 1885, and ten weeks 1887–88, so ideal—that I can’t ever be grateful enough. At Siena we went to the Opera! and I thought of my St Catharine. I tried in homeopathic doses to make W—— love her,

* “To Those Who Suffer.” (Macmillan.)

but I have now given it up. She enjoys beauty of places and buildings and is always herself interesting to me, and so we are very happy, and I turn my back on my friends in history and art until I am in bed and then I let myself go.

"How is George? I have been extra thinking of and praying for him and you and the Ordination Candidates. I did enjoy this ember time last year with you. I thought of you so much in Siena. I love it more each time."

In Rome they were invited to an audience by Pope Leo XIII. Before they were admitted into his presence, Monsignor Mischiatelli asked Sophia for the information of His Holiness whether "she was still a Protestant or had become a Catholic."

"I answered," wrote Sophia to my sister Mary, "that if His Holiness meant to inquire if I belonged to the Roman Church, no. In that sense I was a Protestant, but that, as a Member of the Church of England, I held I belonged to the Catholic Church."

Having thus asserted her belief, the interview took place. The Pope inquired after various friends in England and spoke most kindly to both his visitors. He asked Sophia about the South African war, then threatening to break out. (I quote again from Sophia's letter.)

"He said it need not be, but he was told that Lord Salisbury was '*un peu chancelant et toujours poussé par Lord Chamberlain*,' was it not so? I said we had been away and knew nothing privately, but of one thing I was certain: Lord Salisbury was the strongest man I knew, the one really independent and strongest man in the country, and that there was no *poussing* him! Office was nothing to him but labour and self-denial; he was only in office for duty, for Queen and Country, and that he only cared about what he thought was right and wise. The Pope said that was striking. And when he said it only wanted give and take to *arranger*, I said: 'Yes! but Krüger wants all take and no give,

and Uitlanders won't wait for ever, and that means more complications—perhaps more war.' I added that no self-respecting people could stand the state of things Uitlanders suffered under. He said if it came to leaving Uitlanders to help themselves, that would mean an opening for Germany, and *might* be the beginning, indirectly, of an end of Belgium and Holland, anyhow of Holland, for they hang on threads as always. Then he spoke of Ireland as much happier, and referred to Father's talk, and talked of the need of a Catholic University."

Sophia to Miss Florence Wyndham.

"Albergo di Perugia,
"September 27, 1899.

"I was much alarmed about the interview with the Pope, for going alone was so different to going with Father. It was very odd his asking me, as they say now he sees few and has almost no private audiences. We two were alone with him for twenty minutes. He was most kind, tender even; and very bright and interesting and talked to me freely. I found this time that I was more clear and absolutely surer than ever as to Rome. Of course I pray for our Lord's Will to be realized and for Christians to be one; but no forcing or artificial reunion can do it; and to me there is such a thick stratum of corruption and untruth over the real truth in the Roman Church that, believing as I do in the fact of the Church of England being really Catholic and having real Orders and Sacraments, I can't conceive anything but intense thankfulness for my birthright in the Church of England. Of course it is the Roman line to treat all Protestants as in the same boat, and to write of High Church as leading to Rome; but more and more I see, historically, politically and actually, that only the Church of England with its purified Liturgy and its full sacramental life and its life unfettered by Infallibility, etc., can meet the needs of the twentieth century, can, that is, *work on with God the Holy Ghost in His manifold illumination of Nations and men* and firmly hold up the Standard of the Incarnation. Look at the Protestant Bodies

abroad! Zwingli, Calvin, etc., would be horrified at what their severance from church life has resulted in: Rationalism and practical Unitarianism. No! Only the Church of England can be of any strength at home or abroad with full Catholic teaching and sacraments, but, if you please, no mummeries or worthless imitations of latter day Romanism!"

Sophia had, for several years, made a careful study of the relative positions of our Church and that of Rome. The Roman doctrine of Authority coupled with Infallibility created in her belief, "*The supreme difference between the Old Mother Church and ourselves, at once the attraction from the Authority side and the absolute barrier from the Infallibility side. It is walking blindfold into unknown country.*" In a discussion at Hatfield some time previously she had summed up her own position towards this claim as one "impossible to accept, it is a hopeless bone-in-the-throat. I don't think I could ever have separated, had I lived three hundred years ago; but now, so long as the doctrines of Infallibility and Immaculate Conception hold good, I could not return. But oh! how hateful all the division is!"

During Sophia's wanderings in Italy, a great sorrow came to her from the death of her dearest woman friend in Oxford, the aged Miss Felicia Skene. Their friendship had ripened into a deep intimacy from the time of my sister's first visit to Oxford soon after my father's death, when Miss Skene and Pem alone seemed able to bring balm and healing to her stricken heart. When the friendship was first beginning, Sophia described her as—

"A dear old lady, with cataract coming in both eyes, who delights in walking and prefers a companion. So we prowl about the College Gardens (Oh! so slowly) from two-thirty to Evensong. She has lived a splendid life. For years past, and still it continues, she has been the Angel of the prison here;

and she is one of the few women I have met, who has not lost any even outward delicacy in her work in filth and sin. She wishes me to have a dog! but I have no wish for a dog or cat. There are so many humans and children above all. I may have a bigger heart in another world!"

It was not only Miss Skene's compassionate service to the unhappy derelict women that attracted my sister to her. She quickly recognized that a spiritual kinship bound them together.

"Her interest in people and life in its deepest, widest sense, in thought and expression, made our walks and long hot hours in College gardens very refreshing. And her instinct for love and admiration was like water to a thirsty traveller, as my whole past life had been lived in an atmosphere of widest appreciation and sympathies . . . into this Miss Skene entered—we were at one. She was never weary of my heroes, nor I of hers. Miss Skene introduced me to her family friends and they became mine; Sir Walter Scott and many another of the interesting and great people who had enriched her life. I remember she accepted from me Lord Tennyson with Mr. Browning thrown in, as '*perhaps* a fair exchange for Sir Walter Scott!' We both delighted in human nature, and this point in common it was, I think, which made her wish that, had I intended to settle for life in Oxford, I should take up her prison and other work whenever she should be obliged to give it up. . . .

"Miss Skene is one of those who have borne to me irresistible witness to the fact of Sacramental grace . . . the Christian life to be lived in active expression with real life-giving effect to others. For this, by this, the Christian's life must be well nourished, patiently, ploddingly nourished, and kept in constant touch with the Divine, and thereby also constantly corrected in proportions and tendencies, kept in line with living Truth instead of falling behind or sterilizing into passing expressions." *

* Extracts from a chapter of "Impressions" contributed by Sophia to "Felicia Skene: A Memoir," by E. C. Rickards. (Murray.)

Miss Skene's affection for Sophia was shown in many letters written by her to my sister. A New Year's letter written two years before her death begins with the words—

“Darling Sophy, I cannot let this year pass away in which you have been such a blessing and happiness to me, without telling you how deeply grateful I am to you for all you have been to me and are. I hope with all my heart, dearest, that God may give you back in peace and blessedness a thousand-fold all that you have been to so many on this earth.”

Sophia's absence in Italy prevented her from fulfilling a promise which Miss Skene had extracted from her, to go to her, if possible, whenever her call to die should come. The old lady had another dear friend, whom she counted like a grandson, Sir John Conroy; and he happily was able to be with her every day of her last week on earth, up to the end. He wrote to tell my sister of their mutual loss.

Sir John Conroy was an able Fellow of the Royal Society and a Fellow and Lecturer of Balliol College. When Sophia first went to Oxford in 1895, Sir John was in ill-health and depressed spirits, caused by his unchanging sense of desolation from the death of his widowed mother, Lady Alicia Conroy, who had been not only his mother but his trusted confidante, companion and friend as well. Sophia and he met constantly at Miss Skene's house, and, out of their intellectual companionship, a very intimate and satisfying friendship grew between those two lonely souls, a friendship keenly fostered by Miss Skene, who all her life retained a sentimental delight in romantic relationships. As time went on, the intimacy increased and Sophia found it possible in her own house to arrange her leisure hours so as to coincide with those of the hard-worked Fellow of Balliol.

Sophia took possession of her little house, 32,

Beaumont Street, during a tragic week of national suffering. The South African war had begun on October 11, 1899, and had developed on lines which threatened our inadequate armies with grave danger. The anxiety culminated in the engagements of Stormberg, Magersfontein and Colenso, during the "Black Week" of December 10 to 16.

It was under the shadow of this cloud that Sophia's life entered on its new phase. The house was a thin dull house in a dull street, with very little attraction about it. Her skilful eyes at once discovered its scanty possibilities. She replaced some ugly stained glass by clear panes, she grassed the tiny back garden, she filled her sitting-room with beautiful furniture that had belonged to our Portland Place home, she covered the walls with a mosaic of pictures; and with subtle touches of dim rich tints in curtains and brocade, with great bowls and jars of flowers, she transformed the commonplace rooms into spaces full of beauty. And there "She built of loneliness her secret nest." For, notwithstanding her love of human companionship, she had frequent cravings for silence and solitude; and when in such a mood, the privacy of her own house provided her with a grateful retreat as soothing as that of his cell to the hermit. As she said: "The peace of these rooms, full of dear Portland Place furniture, and holy faces looking at me in photographs, all helps."

In looking back upon those Oxford years I feel as if, with the close of the happiest chapter of my sister's life in 1895, she had withdrawn from the pleasant sunny roads of men, alive with political and social movement, into a misty back-water, tinted with emotions, aspirations, visions; and that, as her body had weakened under the wearisome tasks to which she relentlessly drove it, her soul had more and more steeped itself in contemplation in that tideless water.

The haggard opening of the new century witnessed the departure of many of our greatest friends

for South Africa. Two of them, specially dear to us, we never saw again. Alfred Knowles,* a nephew by marriage, left on January 28, with his regiment, the South Notts Hussars; and after eight months' gallant service was killed in action at Reitfontein in the pursuit of De Wet on August 9, 1900. Colonel Ormelie Hannay, one of a group of officers picked out by Lord Roberts for special service in South Africa, left England on January 5, of the same year.

Soon after he had started, Sophia wrote from Blackmoor to Miss Ella Anson—

"One can think of nothing but the war. Ten Blackmoor men are out there, and dear Ormelie Hannay was telegraphed for on Christmas Day by Lord Roberts. Colonel Hannay's command ended last July, his successor, Colonel Goff, has been shot, leading his men, the Argyll Sutherlands; and such is the state of disablement by death, wounds and illness, that the youngest captain but one is in command now! I have seen several letters from our men and Colonel Hannay's, and they reveal more than any newspaper of heroism and give many sidelights generally. I am at my tether's end. The war eats into one. I never knew how awful war was."

When Colonel Hannay arrived in South Africa, he was given the command of a Brigade of Mounted Infantry, with whom he accomplished a fine march from the Orange River Station to Ramdam on the Riet River. He occupied Ramdam; and on February 16, came into action, near Klip Drift on the Modder River, successfully. On the 18th he was ordered by Lord Kitchener to attack Cronjé with the Mounted Infantry on the east watercourses of the laager, "let the attack cost what it might." In this desperate attempt he fell on the battlefield of Paardeberg, pierced by many bullets, scarcely two hundred yards from the enemy's position. The hour of his death was about five o'clock on a hot summer

* He married Lady Margaret Waldegrave on July 19, 1899.

afternoon. This, in our antipodean hemisphere, was just before dawn on a cold February night. That night Sophia was sleeping in the country house of a friend. She was awakened in the middle of the night by hearing Ormelie Hannay's well-known voice calling her by name: "Sophy! Sophy! Sophy!" She heard it most distinctly. The next morning when she joined her friends at breakfast, she told them about her strange experience, and of the certainty which it had conveyed to her of his death.

This was one instance out of several in which my sister affirmed that she had had communications with the dead, and that visions had been vouchsafed to her.

To the best of my knowledge, before her marriage, she always retained her horror of attempts to explore such mysterious phenomena, and always refused to take part in any psychical experimental investigations, although she lived in a very positive spiritual atmosphere, essentially tinged by mysticism. She possessed distinct psychical sensibility interpreted by a vivid imagination, which made it impossible to determine whether the spiritual communications, which she believed were revealed to her, were experiences or creations of her mind.

She was firmly persuaded of the power of prayer to link the living and the dead; and she declared that, in the loneliness of her Oxford life, she had oftentimes unexpectedly felt the presence of many among the blessed dead, whom she loved, watching over her in her little rooms. Gradually she had become assured of their guardianship, and that of her dear St Catharine; and this assurance saved her from feeling alone or despairing.

One of her visions was so beautiful that I cannot refrain from relating it. It occurred at the time of the death of Mrs Aubrey Moore in Oxford in the summer of 1900. Sophia was continually with her young daughters during their mother's last hours, and it was to her that they turned for support and

sympathy when they were left orphans. Among the sad duties of which she relieved them was that of selecting the spot for their mother's grave. She was very tired and overwrought by all she had gone through with her friends, and she did not reach the cemetery till late in the evening. She arranged about the grave and returned home. That night in her bed she had a dream or vision, she could not say which it was. She thought that she was present at the Marriage of Cana in Galilee, and that, when our Lord gave the order for the water-pots to be filled with water and carried round, she had helped to fill the pots and to pour the wine out afterwards. When every one was served she wanted a tiny portion for herself, but she found there was none left. She sank down in a corner crying with disappointment. Then our Lord came up to her and found her weeping, and He told her not to weep, saying: "My daughter! The water of your love has turned to wine." Then she woke.

Archdeacon Holmes, to whom she often turned for counsel, says that he believed "that my sister's imagination, which was less balanced than other parts of her, was at times positively other-worldish. She certainly saw visions which only an illuminated mind could see, and half her depression was the reaction from her exaltation. She lived very close to God both in high and depressed moments. She simply wanted to find out what God wanted her to be and to do—and to be and to do it."

As the unhappy year drew towards its close, it unfolded fresh sorrows for my sister. She was conscious that she had reached the limit of her strength, she declared that the war-strain was breaking her; while to us who watched her with acute anxiety, it appeared to be goading her into such extreme restlessness as to deprive her of all repose of mind and body. It exacted from her a perpetual, excessive and needless expenditure of strength on

behalf of other people; as, for instance, when the General Election took place in the late autumn of 1900, Sophia insisted on canvassing for Maud's youngest brother, Lord Hugh Cecil, in his constituency at Greenwich, and on returning from thence each night to sleep at Oxford. He remarked of her that: "Sacrifice had become a mania with Sophy. She will one day be buried in the ruins of her old aunts." Sophia laughed when this was repeated to her, but she owned, later, that he had been right, and that she had "got to think it positive sin in her to do anything just because she liked it." "It was that," she said, "which had made her judge so wrongly about going to Rome when Sir John Conroy was ill there, instead of struggling on in England till after Christmas."

For Sophia's suffering was intensified by serious anxiety about Sir John Conroy's condition of health. Their intimacy had recently culminated in their engagement. She had fallen deeply in love with him and was, as she expressed it, "still in the shock and happiness and joy of knowing that she loved him," and was looking forward to the joy of their companionship when they both should have recovered from their present illnesses. Sir John's condition was so critical that his doctor had hurriedly sent him away from the damp mists of Oxford to the sunny air of Italy. He wrote letter after letter to my sister urging her to join him in Rome, and to grant herself her much-needed rest there. Lady Layard, who was also there, added her persuasions; so did we all; while Sophia's doctor was peremptory in his orders to her to go abroad immediately after the Elections.

Unfortunately her lack of judgment led her to believe that it would be an act of cowardice for her to seek refuge from her trouble in flight; and she insisted on remaining in England until the new year. On December 15, the culminating point was reached when the sudden news of Sir John Conroy's death

from pneumonia, in Rome, crushed her like a mill-stone. Her regrettable delay and her anguish at the thought of his lonely death tormented her beyond endurance, and resulted in less than a week in a terrible collapse and entire nerve-exhaustion.

Her illness continued through the whole of the year 1901. During that time she felt as if God was bringing healing to her as with the sharp strokes of a surgeon's knife. Afterwards, during her recovery, she wrote at various times with intense emotion of her trial and sufferings. She became convinced that her Blessed Master was thus preparing her for some new line of service; and neither then nor ever afterwards did she grudge having passed through her dread experiences. She wrote of how

"I felt dead, my nerves smashed, a pulp of wretchedness, dry, utterly stripped, naked, reduced to the helplessness of a baby—a beggar at the Gate of God—nothing whatever to give—I had really got entangled, and God had to tear me at all costs free of all human ties to be really free for Him to use, while I live here, for humans, by having His full way in my soul. I failed, but this my failure has resulted in the life of fulfilment. Now I can really try to serve Him with nothing and for nothing; now, at last, God can work unhindered in my soul. It is really an honour He does me."

And again of how

"It's an awful ordeal to be kept day after day alone with your soul and God—everything has been so strange. I have been taken, almost hurried, through experiences among which I have been like a little child in an unknown country. I have received impressions quickly one after another, when the part which received was in an abnormal state of receptivity and my powers of reasoning, thinking, judging, were in a condition of such abnormal abeyance that practically often they did not exist. It has taken me nearly two years to get mentally acclimatized and balanced to what has been happening to myself, my

soul so spent ; and all through there has grown in me a thirst for our Lord and for His Coming and for the Life of the Resurrection, where righteousness will be our life ; and such a reality of the unseen, almost a new personal realization of my Saviour. All my centre is in the other world. I am not tired of this world, but the other draws me away."

It was in the autumn of 1901, that, to our deep thankfulness, signs of recovery began to be apparent. These increased until, at the beginning of 1902, Sophia's doctor permitted her to travel to Rome under the escort of Mr Evelyn Murray (the brother of her friend Edith). All her will-power was concentrated on this effort because she had set her heart on visiting Sir John Conroy's grave, and on placing a brass tablet to his memory on the walls of the Anglican Church of All Saints in Rome. This she did, and had engraved upon it his coat-of-arms and a touching inscription drawn up by herself.

On arrival at Rome she settled herself in a room in the roof of the Hotel d'Angleterre, which commanded a glorious view of the city, and had a great loggia attached to it. In this she spent most of the day ; occasionally seeing a few old friends, but hardly stirring out of her lofty nest.

And there, by God's mercy, from a quite unexpected quarter, comfort, hope and revival were once more granted to her. One day as she came into the hall of the hotel, she saw there a new guest, the Comte de Franqueville, a French acquaintance for whom she had always retained a feeling of warm friendship. She welcomed him as "a link with her father and her dear old life and home," for she remembered how, on the occasion of her last meeting him in London in 1896, he had related to her a beautiful recollection of my father. He had told her that : "The last time he saw her father was at Lord Coleridge's funeral in Westminster Abbey. He was kneeling on the stones wrapped in prayer. He

seemed alone with God." His face as seen in that light and shadow made the Comte de Franqueville say: "I thought I had seen a Saint." With these words he had stormed and won her enduring affection.

And now, five years after, when he himself was also suffering from bereavement, when they could mutually feel for one another's loneliness and grief, God sent him to bring healing to Sophia. His tender attentions and thoughtful care over her provided exactly the ministrations which she so sorely needed. He persuaded her to rest wisely, to drive into the Campagna, to take a faint interest in events and sights, and in countless little ways helped her through that time of suffering. They became very great and understanding friends. It was no doubt owing to her religious talks with Monsieur de Franqueville that her mind began to turn with a keen impulse towards the vision of possible Reunion between the Roman and Anglican Churches. This new interest stung her into a desire to meet theologians and other ecclesiastics; and gradually she allowed herself to drift back into the stream of human life and home interests.

In April the two friends parted, the Comte de Franqueville to return to France, Sophia to move on to Florence. Before their parting he had made a proposal of marriage to her, to which she had replied: "*Jamais!*" Nevertheless their intimacy remained unbroken, and they kept up a constant correspondence. She wrote from Florence to assure him of her grateful friendship, of how "his absolute understanding of her position was a real Godsend and lift by the way," and of how she had told us all what "an earthly guardian angel" he had been to her.

"It's no use trying to thank you, but I must repeat I am not nearly a saint! What I am is a woman whose life has been a treasury of blessings in love and holy relations and happiness; and who, by God's mercy am a Catholic, being baptized into

the English part of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, and have been nourished by the Blessed Sacrament, without which I could not live. Whatever is a bit nice or good in me is due to that."

From Florence Sophia went in the end of May to her beloved Siena. While there, she wrote to me from her roof chamber (she always liked to dwell as near the clouds as possible), "the windows of which looked to the mountains over vineyards and olives and cypresses, and to the left opened towards the Duomo perched on one promontory, and to St Domenico on another, with swallows whirling from roofs and chimneys round and round."

Sophia to The Lady Laura Ridding.

"I am absolutely idle and some days see no one. Yesterday the Archbishop of Siena saw me in audience, as they call it. He's a very nice man. He kept me an hour. In its course he referred to our Holy Orders, and a Roman Catholic man, who took me there, spoke in a way I could not pass. So I gave it them and left them something to put in their pipes to smoke. I told them also, that I, personally, had no wish whatever to see Roman Catholics change. I wished all here and all with us and all in the Greek Church to remain, each being for themselves and for the body of the Body, the holiest they could; and when they found that I believe as firmly as they do in what, for lack of names, is called 'The Real Presence,' and that I hold the Blessed Sacrament to be vital to us, and that I have nothing to change for, and that our priests are as truly priests with equal consecrating powers—they stared, sighed and were dumb. But it's very useful getting really to know Roman Catholicism at its home. . . . What a blessing the Peace is!"

This letter breathed a happier spirit, and made us feel satisfied in believing that my sister was now on the way to recovery.

During her illness very important historical events had occurred. The death of Queen Victoria, the Peace of Vereeniging ; the illness of King Edward VII. and his deferred Coronation; occurrences which, had she been in her ordinary health, would have stirred her deeply ; but till now she had appeared to give little attention to these outside affairs.

She continued to send long letters to Monsieur de Franqueville, while he wrote constantly letters full of anxious inquiries as to whether her health continued to improve, and pressing upon her the consideration of a visit to him at his Château de Bourbilly in Burgundy, where he believed that the pure air and tranquil surroundings might be of real use in restoring her strength.

"I have the feeling," she wrote to him, "of being only on a very interesting journey homewards ; and also I think the contrast of the awful moral experience I had with this perfect peace and feeling almost like a little child with no cares and no fears and new eyes for everything, does make me always in peace, often happy, sometimes amazingly happy, always satisfied ; and if I had no physical pain it might be too easy. I know God my Father loves me and understands. 'We are His people and the sheep of His pasture' often comes to me ; and Ps. xxiii. seems made for me."

On June 14, she wrote to him—

"When I said '*Jamais*,' I meant *jamais* in its absolute sense, but I was not referring either to kindness, love, help in general or to yours in particular. When I say a thing, I mean it. I wrote : 'I give you my friendship unreservedly,' and the friendship is mutual. In giving, I accepted ; and I prove it by taking all your wonderful goodness to me as to Bourbilly."

She had accepted the invitation and arrived there on July 11.

The journey was made as easy as possible for her

by her host's thoughtful arrangements. He met her at Genoa, and drove her in a comfortable carriage the whole way thence to his house. There Sophia stayed for four months, broken only by the interlude of a few days' visit to me and my husband at Aix-les-Bains. We were at once reassured by the change in her look and bearing.

It was clear to us that her host had become a very dear friend to her, and that this new element in her life had already accomplished wonders in helping her mind to recover its tone and interests in persons and things. She still looked very shadowy; but she was happy with us, and gave us supreme delight by her conversations, in her old eager tones of sympathy, concerning the persecutions of the Church in France and other deeply interesting French events.

Sophia's life at Bourbilly was exactly fitted to supply her with the calm and stimulation which she needed in the stage of convalescence that she had then reached. The charm of the surrounding country, rich in historic interest such as that of the neighbouring medieval town of Semur-en-Auxois,* beautiful with hills and woods and sunny fields; the glories of the ancient Château de Bourbilly, surrounded by lovely woods and avenues; the unexpectedness and freshness of French country-house life; the sympathetic host and his daughters and grandchildren—to all these my sister's heart went out in affectionate response, while a gradual change was at work in her mind which was transforming her *Jamais* into *Peut-être*.

On November 18, Sophia returned to England, and went to Brighton to stay with Freda Biddulph.

While there, she was much torn between her craving for Monsieur de Franqueville's companionship and devotion, and her English ties and work.

* The scene of Mrs Oliphant's story of "The Beleaguered City."

Sophia to The Comte de Franqueville.

“ November 27, 1902.
“ Brighton.

“ If I married you, all the use of me for the Church and for souls in Society is over; and my marrying a Roman Catholic would stop all my work for our Church public. Then all my social use, knowledge of politics, etc., is English, and I am not now able to begin that abroad. I have use here in all that, and naturally I am, as you said, a fish in the water again over here. I am so British and have every root in England. . . . But no details matter if God’s desire is for me to marry you.”

She made her decision on Christmas Day, when she wrote to him the words : “ Yes, *Oui*;” and to us to tell us that she had that day promised to marry the Comte de Franqueville.

We were aware of his great admiration for her, but there is no doubt that we all found the announcement startling. It was difficult to think of Sophia, the ardent patriot and devoted Churchwoman, as married to a husband who was not English, not a member of the Anglican Church, not a subject of the King ; and it was grievous to think of her in her invalid condition, still removed from full recovery, as being separated from us by such barriers of sea and land. Nevertheless, as we considered the matter, our conviction strengthened more and more, that, possibly, what was needed to effect her cure might be the very conditions which we deplored : an entire escape from her old associations, an absolute change of environment and entrance into wholly new atmosphere and interests, with the devoted affection which would surround her there.

Accordingly, as the weeks passed, we reconciled ourselves to this unexpected development of my sister’s life, and rejoiced in welcoming our new brother into the family. It was delightful to realize

that her unnatural life of loneliness would shortly end; and to hope that the new interests and occupations awaiting her in her French home would restore to her life the flavour which she had always so keenly appreciated, and the absence of which she felt so acutely.

This joy in her new married life was what we prayed for when we all gathered with Sophia at the Holy Communion Service in St Paul's Cathedral on Sunday, February 15, 1903; and on the following day in the Chapel of London House (the residence of the Bishop of London), when my husband and Canon Jelf officiated at the Anglican Marriage Service of Amable Charles Franquet, Comte de Franqueville, and of Sophia Matilda Palmer.

After the wedding breakfast at the Admiralty,* Sophia and her husband left for Paris, where the Roman Marriage Service was duly performed on the 19th by the Rev. Père Guerpillon of the Order of the Maristes, in the little Chapel of the Château de La Muette, the historic house at Passy of the Comte de Franqueville.

* Lord Selborne was at that time First Lord of the Admiralty.

CHAPTER IX

1903—1910

(AGE: FIFTY TO FIFTY-EIGHT)

WITH the possible exception of certain public buildings, Sophia's new home, the Château de La Muette is the most interesting house in Paris. Built by King Charles IX. on the site of a royal hunting lodge in what was then known as the Forest of Rouvroy (the present Bois de Boulogne) and given by him to his sister Marguerite de Valois, it was afterwards inhabited by the Kings of France, a succession of Governors, the Duchesse de Berry, Madame de Pompadour and Madame du Barry. Marie Antoinette slept there on the eve of her marriage to the Dauphin, and there it was that she and Louis XVI. spent the first month of their ill-fated reign in the spring of 1774. During the Revolution the property was sold to various purchasers, but it eventually passed into the hands of Sebastian Erard, the inventor of the modern French piano. Madame de Franqueville, the first wife of my brother-in-law, and a relation of the Erards, inherited the estate and left it at her death in 1900 to her husband and her children.

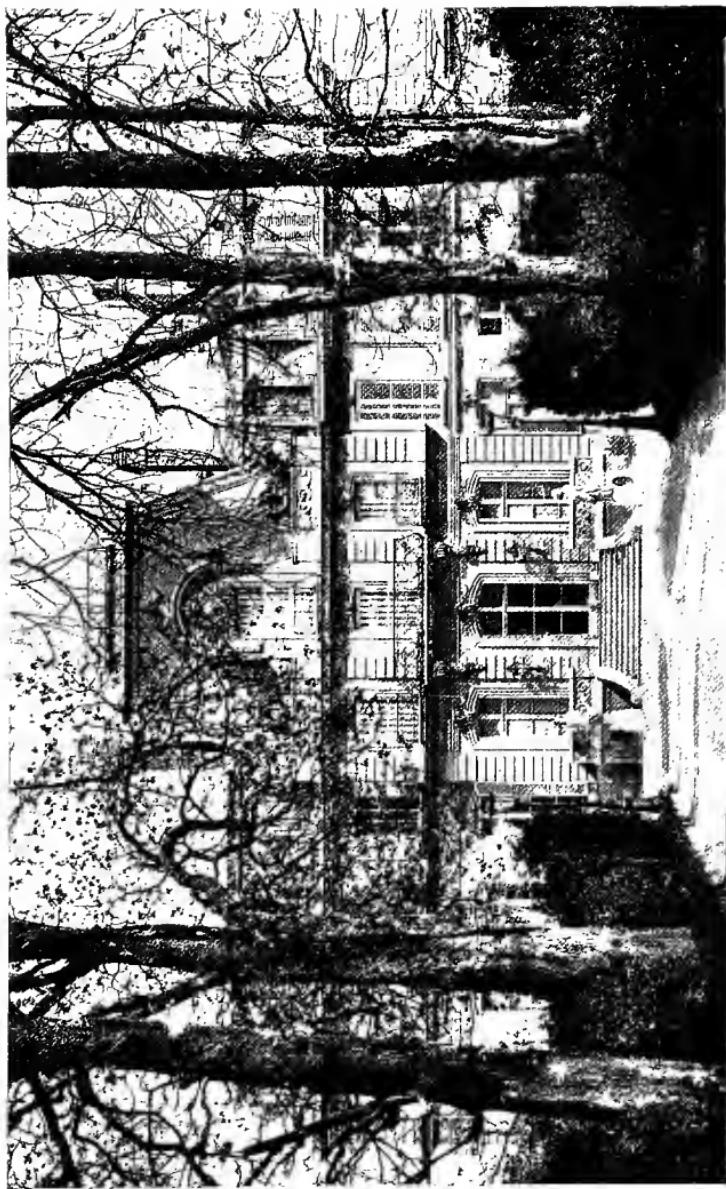
In February, 1903, when Sophia arrived at her new home, the invading suburb of Passy had not encroached to the present extent upon the beautiful park of La Muette. Its long lime avenues, lawns, groups of cedars, chestnuts, ilexes, tulip-trees and catalpas, its stone seats and statues glimmered through the wintry sunshine in all their cold beauty. The spaciousness, the glories of the white house full

of noble rooms, rich in treasures of old French furniture, tapestries and pictures, would have appealed warmly to my sister's sympathy had she been in normal health. As it was, she felt for a long time unable to respond. Possibly her psychic intuitions which, at Bourbilly, made her actually conscious of the abiding presence of St Chantal,* were, at La Muette, sensitive of lingering influences of some of its former evil inmates.

"I love Bourbilly," she wrote to us, "but here I feel like a lost unquiet spirit. It's very unhomey here and like rooms lived in by temporary occupiers." There is no doubt that it took time before Sophia ceased to feel herself an *Uitlander* in a strange country. One of her sons-in-law accurately described her position in these words: "She came among us as a step-mother, a foreigner and of another faith, she found as difficult circumstances as could be conceived—and she was able to 'grease all the wheels'!" Not only did she eventually establish this conciliatory influence, but she ended by winning the entire confidence and devotion of her husband's children and grandchildren, a triumphant reward of her faithful love and unselfishness.

This harvest of love was not reaped in a day. Now, at the beginning of Sophia's married life, its first-fruits sprang rapidly from the mutual love of her and her invalid step-daughter Cecile. The sight of the helpless sufferer, bearing her life-long martyrdom with the same exquisite patience as that of our aunt, Mother Emily, stirred Sophia's deepest feelings, and made her devote herself with eager joy to the cherishing of Cecile. It is impossible to say how much her gradual recovery of health owed to the quiet hours daily spent by her in her step-daughter's sick-room, which supplemented by their soothing influence the unceasing love and ministrations of her husband.

* See page 298.



CHÂTEAU DE LA MUETTE AT PASSY.

When the annual migration to Bourbilly took place in the summer, fresh help came to my sister from the friendship of the villagers. Sophia immediately set to work to make the acquaintance of every man, woman and child, feeling in her intercourse with them as if she were touching hands with her dear friends at Blackmoor. Her husband delighted in seeing the traditions of *La Bonne Dame* (the name by which St Chantal was spoken of in Bourbilly) thus revived by the latest châtelaine of his house. Her friendly intercourse was certainly needed. Her heart was saddened by the unfamiliar aspect of such kindly people being apparently completely exiled from God. They seemed never to think of Him, never to hear about Him, never to have any sense of the need of help for their starving souls. To their amazement, they heard from the new Lady of Bourbilly talk, such as they were little accustomed to, about the love of God for them and the calls to them to serve and worship Him.

"Are you not a Protestant?" they asked her. Sophia promptly replied that she was a Catholic; and as they found their curious visitor delightfully kind and winning, they did not long withstand her advances, but soon began to look for her visits and to welcome her among them. One of the first signs of her conquest of their friendship was an invitation to a rustic wedding as one of the invited guests. To her delight, the whole party sang in her honour the old song, *not* of days of an *entente cordiale*—

"Marlborough s'en va t'en guerre!"

"There is much more to encourage me than to discourage," she wrote to an English correspondent. "God helps me to a degree which no one can ever know. It is just His strength in my weakness. I am much braver and, I hope, wiser; and I feel growing spiritual strength and patience. Then it is true what Madame Darcy * said yesterday. The villagers have

* Daughter of the Comte de Franqueville.

taken to me and everywhere now ask for me, and now I feel quite at home with the poor here. I always wonder at the difficulty expressed by some as to class, etc. I never feel any difference in class or nationality ; and, from the first, some of the people were friends, but now all are nice. I see clearly we must leave politics alone and try to convert, to bring back, to strengthen and to encourage in religion."

She believed that the stolid acquiescence of many of the country people in the tyranny of the atheistic Freemasonry* and in the anti-Christian attitude of the Government was due to the haunting nightmare of the *Ancien Régime* and their terror lest remonstrances should weaken the Republic. Over and over again they explained their position to her in some such words as these : " We are better off than before the Revolution. The Republic is best. We have peace and good harvests under the Republic. It is certainly a pity that no religion is now in the schools, that the children have no discipline, no obedience, that no kind Sisters nurse in the hospitals ; but the Government knows best and I vote for it, for there is the Republic ! "

Sophia did her best to provide some substitute for the sick nursing of the banished nuns. With the help of a Semur doctor she instituted a regular system of medical attendance for the sick people of her village, and she continued it so long as she lived. After her death this gentleman stated that words could not describe what her loss would mean to the neighbourhood. His professional rounds had made known to him the extent of her wonderful goodness to the whole countryside, where he had seen with admiration the sympathy and rare tact by which Madame de Franqueville had been able to obliterate all class distinctions and to persuade those whom

* Since the first French Revolution, the Freemasons of France (in contrast to those of England) have adopted a line of antagonism to Christianity and to belief in God.

she wanted to help to accept from her comfort and moral strengthening. He said that he did not know of a single sufferer within his large district whom she had not soothed and helped.

In laying the foundations of her friendship with her neighbours, in nursing Cecile and the sick folk of the village, in gradually increasing intimacy with her new family and in merry intercourse with the grandchildren, the first years of Sophia's life in France passed tranquilly, though one fiercely discordant note continually disturbed their harmony. As in this memoir I am only concerned with its effect upon my sister, it will be convenient to speak of it now in reference to the earlier half of her married life, notwithstanding that it clashed like a tocsin through almost all that life: I allude to the discord created by the French Government's treatment of the Church.

Sophia's experience in the course of her Church Defence work in England had made her aware of the temper in which political persecutions could be engineered; of the jealousy, distorted views and partisanship of political opponents, who were inflamed with such passion for despoiling and crippling the Church of their aversion that it deprived them of all sense of justice, liberty and honour; and of the supineness with which indifferent onlookers accepted the specious excuses offered by the attackers. Now, for a second time, she encountered the same manifestations in a country where they had assumed monstrous proportions. Monsieur Combes, the Prime Minister, was asserted to have proclaimed his aim in these words: "I am working to abolish Christianity!" while the Government was responsible for having printed copies of Monsieur Viviani's declaration, that "*God had ceased*," stuck up on the walls of all the French towns.

It is not wonderful that such manifestations should have aroused the sharpest indignation and grief within my sister's heart.

"I am unravelling my way," she wrote, "like some one keeping hold of an end in a tangle, to find out this people and the meaning of France as it is—and *inter alia*—Dreyfus and this present Church broil!"

And again: "It needs to be always praying to keep going. I feel as if the hosts of evil choked and trampled on me. If you were in France you would understand. Just think! not a priest allowed to go near the wounded and dying, even though relations begged, because now the Government requires forms to be filled up *personally* (!) by sick and dying to ask for a priest! One day I'll tell you of a battle I had and triumphed in a hospital for a dying woman."

Sophia was most anxious that English people should understand the true meaning of the religious crisis in France. To ensure the accuracy of her statements, she addressed a series of questions to all the French Bishops, and, on the replies received from seventy of them, she framed several letters and articles which were published in English newspapers and Reviews. Of these the two most important were an article in the April, 1907, number of the *Church Quarterly Review*, called: "The Religious Crisis in France. Some personal impressions"; and another in the June, 1907, number of the *Nineteenth Century*, called: "The Church Difficulties in France from a French Point of View." Two of later date may also be mentioned: one in the October, 1911, number of the *Dublin Review*, called: "A Great French Bishop"; and one in the September, 1913, number of the *Nineteenth Century*, called: "Disestablishment in France and in England." The letters and articles were very carefully written for the enlightenment of candid English minds. The payment received by her for these articles was sent by her to the poorest of the French dioceses.

The persecution of the French Church culminated in the passing of a law on December 9, 1905, concerning the "*Séparation des Eglises et de l'Etat*." This

law broke the *Concordat* made between Napoleon I. and Pius VII. While it freed the State of its obligations to the Church, it allowed the Church to retain a portion of her endowments on the sole condition of her acceptance of the yoke of a new Constitution and of *Associations Cultuelles*. Out of eighty-nine Bishops, out of 60,000 clergy, all but two Bishops and six clergy refused to accept this intolerable condition, with the result that, through the length and breadth of France, the tragic sight was seen of a Government bureaucracy "expressing its petty tyranny under the name of Liberty, and defaming the fair name and ideal of a Republic by acts contrary to justice, truth, liberty, equality, fraternity." Persecution, confiscation of Church property, withdrawal of salaries, penalized priests and people alike. Instance after instance of the intense expressions of grief and devotion called forth by this treatment came to my sister's knowledge.

"It is wonderful," she wrote, "how, despite the constantly disturbing influences, the shocks of revolution, the weaknesses and mistakes from within, the hindrances and persecutions from without, the Catholic Church in France has held on; and, far from losing ground, is able now, in the hour of material ruin, to step out in increased and increasing spiritual strength." *

Sophia flung herself vehemently into the contest, eagerly trying to help and encourage the brave confessors. In 1903, she had a wonderful experience at Lourdes, where she went with her husband on a man's pilgrimage, composed of men of every class from all parts of France, who gathered there not to seek healing for themselves, but on a Mission of Intercession for the healing of their country from the disease of atheism. In 1904, at Rome, she per-

* From an Article on "The Religious Crisis in France: Some Personal Impressions," *Church Quarterly Review*, April, 1907.

suaded him to take her to be received, with a vast number of French pilgrims, by Pope Pius X. In 1906 she was again in Rome, and was present at the Consecration by the Pope of fourteen French Bishops, among whom was one who afterwards became a very dear friend and neighbour, the saintly Monseigneur Dandolle, Bishop of Dijon. In the winter of the same year she formed one of the huge crowd which escorted the aged Cardinal Richard, Archbishop of Paris, when he was expelled from his palace. The following letters give her experience on two of these occasions:—

Sophia to The Lady Laura Ridding.

“ Hotel d’Angleterre, Rome,

“ March 14, 1904.

“ I saw the new Bishop of Gibraltar * at a meeting yesterday. He seems a nice slip of a man. In his robes he reminded me irresistibly of Portland Place. The dining-room sideboard jumped up, and over it Keble and Selwyn by Richmond. Bishop Collins would fit in as a third. He is quite a relic! just that type of refined earnest nice nineteenth century. Miss Yonge would have made him a pet. We are delighting in Ecclesiastics, Roman princes, Americans of every type and Ambassadors. The Pope † we have only seen with a French Pilgrimage. I made Franquet tack us on, so that my Mathilde ‡ might go. Her baby of three months old died suddenly just before we left Paris, and she minded it dreadfully as she really loves children. I knew that the Pope would cheer her, so we went. There were thirteen hundred real pilgrims with badges and including every class, but far the most quite peasants. Such a variety of costume, in caps, etc., from all parts of France. Brittany fishermen and others whose languages I could not understand. Imagine! The Pope gave his hand and blessing to each. And to many who asked his advice or offered presents he spoke also. Some brought

* Dr Collins, Anglican Bishop of Gibraltar.

† Pope Pius X., 1903-1914.

‡ Her maid.

him tips! Gold pieces, some horrible bead-worked things, bits of treasures, photographs. He accepted all so sweetly. We were spread both sides of the Vatican Galleries; and Franquet,* for fear of losing us, made Mathilde and me stick behind him. He followed as *camerière* of the Pope with the others, who followed the Pope, so I saw all. It took just one and three-quarter hours, and then the Pope was so utterly exhausted and told one of the Vicars-General of Paris, Abbé Odelin (who led the Pilgrimage), and the French Bishops, that he could do no more! He had meant to speak. We ended with the *Credo*, Lord's Prayer and *Ave Maria* and the Blessing. The Pope looks a very simple man of very strong will, and kindness and goodness flow from him. He misses his pastoral life terribly. He sent for his three old sisters from Venice: they kept his house there, and rooms are preparing in the Vatican. They are very humble in black shawls and do their own marketing. The Pope preaches in his courtyard to the people, from Easter on. He did it every Sunday from last September to November, when it became too cold."

Sophia to The Lady Laura Ridding.

"La Muette,
"December 22, 1906.

"I long to see you, and, if I can, I shall come for a few days; but Franquet has offered the Cardinal (Archbishop of Paris) to have the Bishops' Meeting here, as the Archbishop's house has been confiscated, and it is difficult to see where eighty-eight Bishops could meet, if not here. I wish I could enlighten my country as to this present struggle. Bobby writes asking me, and I shall answer him and ask him to show my statement to you all and Cecils. I am chiefly exasperated by the *Times*, next the *Daily Mail* and *Morning Post*, and perhaps next by the *Church Times* and *Guardian*, for they ought to be better informed. A glaring instance is in a last week's *Times* on the dismay and depression of the clergy and lack of *solidarité*. There is absolute unity in the Church here. All attempts at schism have

The Comte de Franqueville.

failed, thank God. There is no discouragement. From Cardinal Richard, aged eighty-eight, to the youngest seminarist, all are courageous and cheerful, Men of all classes throng the churches in Paris, all very quiet, very determined. Franquet went (as a *Notre Dame Churchwarden*) on December 10, to wind up, and found the old Cardinal bedridden, but so calm and cheerful, and sure of good in the end. Not only the *Times*, but the French Government made a mis-statement in regard to his expulsion. Briand dared to say in the Chamber yesterday that the Archbishop need not have left, that there was no expulsion ! What really happened was that the order to evacuate was sent and no date; then a second order for evacuation in three days, to be on Monday, 17th, at one o'clock. The Archbishop had answered to the first he should wait to be turned out. When the second order came, his coadjutor and doctor begged him to let it be known he would go. The Cardinal wished to stand out, but he was urged to give way, and he did so. After this was published in the journals, it was stated unofficially and anonymously in Government papers that, if the Archbishop petitioned the Ministry to allow him to remain on account of his age and infirmities, they would allow him ! Of course he took no notice of this anonymous statement, and would not ask their pity.

“ Franquet went to support the Cardinal, and I went too. I shall never forget the scene. Ten thousand in the courtyard and outside, and at least fifteen thousand accompanying him from the Place des Invalides to the Rue de Babylon. Well ! Franquet went in. I remained as a late comer (though we were there before one) wedged into the crowd against the steps. A little poor bare-headed woman said : ‘ Ah ! vous êtes si grande, je ne verrai rien et je suis ici depuis ce matin, je ne verrai rien de notre Archevêque ! ’ So I went behind her, and in doing so several others sucked me in, and I was a good way back with only men and not one priest. There was a small proportion of priests compared to the mass of laymen of all classes. Many more men than women. Waiting for the Cardinal to come, hymns were sung, and when some one started : ‘ A bas les

Franc maçons!* one of the Cardinal's clergy who stood guard at the door called out: 'Aujourd'hui personne criera "A bas!" on peut crier: "Vive l'Eglise! Vive Pius X.! Vive le Cardinal! Vive la paix, vive surtout la Liberté!"' And 'La Liberté! Voulons Liberté!' rang me deaf. But when some one held up a crucifix, the Nicene Creed burst out, and was taken up from roofs and windows and from the street beyond; and never, never have I so felt that glorious Creed so fill and rush through the veins of my soul. And after, as we tramped along, after, before and around the little coupé carrying the Cardinal, going at crawling pace on account of the dense crowd, three times more did the Nicene rise up with such life and reverence ringing out in the very wide street, and then in the Rue de Babylon (very narrow) it ended like the voice of Christendom concentrated. When the Cardinal appeared (after one and a half hours' waiting) an old soldier took out the horse, and men rushed to drag and push the coupé. I was lifted off my feet breathless, pushed and pressed horribly, and was swept out and along. No violence, all order. Only you know what such a crowd is. I clutched a big old blacksmith who acted a father to me! I could not help it, I found my cheek wet! It was too much! To see these poor (so many very poor) and big working men and all sorts, all feeling the attack on God, on Christ. The real bottom of all going on in France is hatred of God. Viviani spoke out what is the real moving force. I feel it all round me. In between the Creed was growled ceaselessly: 'Voulons Liberté!' As we tramped past the back of Sacré Cœur Convent (now shut up) the three old nuns, left temporarily as housekeepers, peeped out: 'Vivent les Scœurs!' was shouted, and off went every hat! Now I have written all this, I am so tired. Show it to Bobby and the others, please."

In this letter, my sister spoke of the coming Conference of the French Bishops to be held at La Muette. It took place there, January 15th to 19th, 1907. Both host and hostess threw all their energies into the task of preparation, no light task, for it

* See page 274.

involved arrangements for turning the *salon blanc* into a Sessions Hall for eighty-two guests, *i.e.* three Cardinals, fourteen Archbishops and sixty-five Bishops, only six of the whole episcopate being absent. It also involved the provision of meals and other hospitality. Sophia was perplexed as to what to provide for refreshment in the afternoon, so she took counsel with Cardinal Richard, and asked if it should take the form of tea. "A few may take it, but not many," was his discouraging comment on her suggestion. On her pressing him to tell her of some more popular substitute, he told her that what they would really like would be punch! Accordingly a large bowl of punch made its due appearance each day, and it was thoroughly appreciated.

The pleasure of their successful hospitality was spoilt for my sister by her anxiety for her husband, who fell ill at the end of the week. She wrote—

"When the Bishops' Meeting began, I was at work from half-past six a.m. to one, or half-past two a.m.! I had audience with the *Maitre d'Hotel* at one a.m. and with the cook at half-past six, five hours later! And the last three days Franquet was coughing all night, and I doctoring. He would not give in, and so ended in congestion of both lungs. He took immense trouble; he did it all splendidly as well as he could."

After the Assembly had dispersed, Sophia sent a letter to the *Daily Telegraph* in reply to a number of letters from England asking for information on the ecclesiastical situation in France. I quote these words from the conclusion—

"The Meeting of the French Episcopate in this house, Jan. 15-19, brought me for the first time into the midst of the clerical part of the French Church. The Bishops were full of the heroism and courage of their clergy, and left me in profound admiration for themselves. Their cheerfulness, courage, faith, spoke of endowment rather than ruin;

and, indeed, it is plain that the grace of God is with them, is with the Church in this tremendous ordeal. Not more than six out of 60,000 clergy have followed the schismatic lead of the *Matin*. . . . There is every reason to be encouraged, despite the immense difficulties of the situation. There is unity; the spirit of sacrifice is spreading like a flame. Personally, I could tell of magnificent gifts from the very poor, from artisans and tradespeople, from the daily necessities cut lower, from savings of many years. I for one look out in hope."

Sophia to The Lady Laura Ridding.

"La Muette.

"February 21, 1907.

"I enjoyed the Bishops *immensely*. They are a splendid set. They were all just as nice to me as if I were a Roman. Every one is. Till that week I never saw many ecclesiastics. It's a very lay atmosphere here, despite a nun in the house and a Dominican Chaplain! And the clergy, apart from practical parochial relationship, are like shooting stars here! but now I have my Bishop friends, and they come to see me and talk to me just as George and Archbishops Benson and Temple. It refreshes me! Abbé Portal I see; and now at the Archbishop's they welcome me as a sort of Phœbe!"

"Abbé Portal and Calvet and Boudinhon and Rivière all are friends I enjoy; and above all, when I see him, the Bishop of Dijon. Some Bishops dined here the other night and were most refreshing to me."

What the Bishops thought of Sophia may be gathered from the words of one of them, the Bishop of Dijon, Monseigneur Dadolle, when one of Sophia's step-daughters lamented to him the fact of her not belonging to their Church. He declared that he felt so convinced about her good faith that he advised those who loved her not to worry themselves or her, but to trust to prayer and to God.

What the effect might be of Sophia's championship of the Church in France upon her devotion to her

own Church was at this time a matter of deep interest to us all. While it did not produce any weakening of her attachment to the latter, it certainly absorbed her enthusiasm. "She has a wonderful gift of sympathy of a certain kind," said Mary Waldegrave after some talks on the subject with Sophia. "She gets engrossed in a particular matter, always a drama of sorts; and for the time everything else, not more or less in touch with her drama, is crowded out. She is so emotional that I can quite believe her present religious centre appeals to that in her nature and may take up an undue place."

I do not think that it did this; but I think emotion for the time took the place of study, and apparently led her to drop much of her reading of Anglican theology. It also filled her with a terror of every shade of Higher Criticism, as being probably permeated with "Modernism"; for she believed that "Modernism" inevitably led to naked unbelief.

She continued to emphasize her strong belief in the impregnable position of the Church of England; and her estimate of the comparative values of that Church and the Church of Rome is interesting to read. The following extracts from letters written by her during these years give some of her conclusions:—

"It seems to me that less than justice is done to the Church of England at home. The more I think over what our Church is, its difficulties and drawbacks, the more intensely I thank God for its great preponderating good results and magnificent work."

"I am more and more sure (if one can be more when absolutely sure) that all we have seen with our eyes, and lived in and on, and which our fathers have told us, is the fruit of the Tree of Life. No imitation, but the very fruit of the very tree. There is not one moment since any of the breaches with Rome (including the last and final) when the fruit has been wholly wanting. For the great branch was not cut off from sap life; it was notched and hacked and maimed, but not vitally. The breach with Rome was a wholly

temporal breach—not, of course, without resultant effects on spiritualities; but, while allowing for the immense losses, the Constitution of the Catholic Church of England (or Church of England, as part of the Holy Catholic Apostolic Church) has remained essentially sound. The state of Church things in France and Italy in the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries exactly agreed with the state of things in the Church of England so often deplored and grovelled over by English Churchmen. While I always stuck out (like Father) for the fact of good going on and Church life, even if in dribbles, then in our Church, I never before knew how similar all was here in abuse and low standard."

"Why did dear Father D—, why do others, talk of the Church of England as so narrow and conventional and where all fresh power, etc., is cramped and crushed? I know now thoroughly Roman Catholic administration and all. Its grand side is its simple realization of the living life of all, those gone on or here. That is badly missed to many in our Church; but as to all else, I can only say every day, I thank God for the Church of England and that I have my birthright there."

"I live in the Church of England and Church of Rome as *one*. I see the *défauts* in each; but am not oppressed by them, only I realize more and more that there is nothing to choose between the *défauts* and drawbacks of either England or Rome. *Nothing*. But *at its best* the Church of England has the best and results in the best all round. I now know intimately some of the very best, intellectually and spiritually, Roman Catholics here and in Italy; and also I have known them in England. The Incarnation, as realized in our Church at its best, achieves its ideal *all round* in a fulness I do not see equally achieved here. (Mind! I do not mean, of course! as to the question of salvation or even sanctity) but there is a sort of permeation of mind, soul, spirit, the whole being, with the vivifying, strengthening, enriching, sweetening, inspiring life of Christ Himself, the Ideal of God in Man, which I have known and know in the Church of England sacramentally and not in the Church of Rome. So I go on breathing: 'Thy Kingdom come.'

I never thought I could naturally feel 'Come! Come! Come!' as I do now in the closing words of the Apocalypse."

Of her husband's attitude to my sister in regard to her fealty to the Church of her baptism, Sophia always fervently declared it to be "most generous and loyal. He minds dreadfully, and he thinks I am blinded by my British infallibility." Monsieur de Franqueville's tender anxiety to do his utmost to help her in the early days of their intimacy, when she was so ill and alone in Rome, had led him to consult Monsignor Merry del Val,* who told him that he had had many conversations with my sister, and that he was absolutely convinced of the evident and luminous sincerity of her conviction, and that therefore she ought not to be troubled or to have doubts inspired into her, but that they should pray for her. (This wise counsel was repeated in 1915 by the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris, who also spoke to her husband of her faith as absolute and certain, and advised that she should not be troubled by speaking to her, in her dying state, of conversion.)

The fruits of the Tree, the holiness of her life, always so visibly before his eyes, convinced her husband that this counsel was sound. They had many theological discussions, and he was undoubtedly often amused by her positive and inflexible views on theology and Church history. When he advanced the familiar controversial arguments concerning the claims of Henry VIII. or Protestant explanations of the XXXIX. Articles, she swept them aside with contempt, fortifying her assertions with the authority of my father and Sir John Conroy. "No reply was possible," her husband declared, "in the face of such decisive proof! She who rejected the Infallibility of the Pope believed firmly in that of her *fiancé*, her father and herself!" But while he was aware of the

* Now Cardinal Merry del Val.

unsoundness of her logic, Monsieur de Franqueville was greatly impressed by the depth of her knowledge of religious matters, by her remarkable familiarity with every portion of the Old and New Testaments, and by the failure ever to find her ignorant of the exact text and source of any biblical quotation with which her knowledge might be tested.

Undoubtedly compensation for their difference of belief in certain grave controversial matters came to them through the perfect unity of belief of husband and wife concerning all the deepest Articles of the Christian Faith ; and also in their absolute agreement in their opinion of things in France, political and religious.

While the Church in France was being so fiercely tested by cruel trials and changes, the family life of my sister and her husband pursued its tenor. The winter and spring were always passed by them at La Muette, with the exception of a few weeks usually spent in visits to Rome and occasionally, also, to Lady Layard in Venice, to other Italian places or to the Riviera. Early summer brought them to England, where we each and all plotted our best to grab Sophia for a visit longer and freer than that promised to any one else. The autumn always found them at Bourbilly, where Sophia was surrounded from morning till night by merry troops of grandchildren and their parents. Long automobile excursions, games, visits to the village people, gardening, visits to friends and neighbours, filled all the busy days. Occasionally she had the joy of welcoming some of her relations and friends from England to her lovely country home ; but for the most part, they visited her in Paris, where November found her once again installed at La Muette. Thus ran the circling months.

Sophia made a point of attending all her English family's rallies ; she hungered for more frequent opportunities of intercourse with us. She confessed that—

"In old days when I did not know, it never occurred to me that there was not plenty of time. Now I grudge every chance of being with people I love; and, looking back, I feel as if I did not half clutch at it all. But I know that one ought to try to do one's duty; and if people make even love shove out duty, love becomes mean and poor."

Therefore, whatever the occasion, whether of the quiet interest of the historical pageant at Winchester,* or of the joyful event of Mabel Palmer's wedding with Lord Howick,† or of the mingled emotions of parting with my brother, when he left England to take up his duty as High Commissioner of South Africa,‡ or of the pathos of Mother Emily's funeral at Mixbury §—Sophia, as in old days, stood among us.

She wrote to Lord Stanmore after the visit to the Mixbury of our childhood—

"At Pem's funeral we all felt as if death did not exist. Indeed, as I prayed in the dear church, I only felt all my special witnesses touching me and saying: 'Praise and honour and thanksgiving!' and also I felt how everything had worked for the fulfilling of good for us all. More and more Pem's face had become a monstrans. You saw the Blessed Sacrament."

Her heart was very faithful to the shrines of her early days; its needle always pointed west to them. The same year, 1906, Sophia gave herself the happiness of adorning the sanctuary of Blackmoor Church with some beautiful panelling and the statues of the Blessed Virgin and St John, St Mary Magdalene and St Matthew. Beneath the group of saints she had the following inscription carven:—

"Let us give thanks and glorify our Father which is in Heaven for the lives of those in whom we have seen His light and felt His love, especially Roundell

* On June 30, 1908.

† On April 29, 1905.

‡ On June 16, 1906.

§ On January 24, 1906.

Palmer, first Earl of Selborne, Lord High Chancellor, and Laura, Countess of Selborne, our father and mother; and Sir John Conroy, Baronet, F.R.S., Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, as also for other relations and friends of all classes, whose love and goodness enriched our whole life. 'Here is the patience of the Saints, they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' 'Be not sluggish, but imitators of them who through faith and patience, inherit the promises.' 'For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promises.'"

S.M.P.F. 1906.

Sophia had been married five years before I was able to pay my first visit to her at La Muette. My husband's death,* my removal from the Midlands to Hampshire and illnesses had prevented my getting either to Bourbilly or to Paris. As I had arranged to go to my brother in South Africa at the end of 1908, we determined that, whatever else failed, my French visit should anyhow be accomplished before I sailed for the Cape.

Accordingly, my first sight of the Château de La Muette was in gay spring sunshine, which dappled the avenues with emerald light, and set the great chestnuts and slender lilacs and catalpas aflame with pyramid blossoms. The wind rippled the long pale grasses, tinted here and there with jonquils and hyacinths, and alive with bevies of small birds and larks who were diving into their depths after seed and insects. Directly I stepped into the great *salon rouge*, I saw traces of my sister's genius for arranging furniture and draperies. She had framed for herself, her bureau, her books, photographs and a water-colour sketch of the Hampshire Downs, a charming settlement in one of the tall windows. On her left stretched the park and avenue, guarded, within a stone's throw of her chair, by two eighteenth-century statues of warriors. On her right there

* The Bishop of Southwell died August 30, 1904.

gazed benignly at her from the crimson velvet walls, Saints and Martyrs from Correggio's pallet, a noble Nativity by Murillo, Our Lord Blessing Little Children, by Rubens, and Mars and Venus engaged on the Education of Cupid by Correggio. Sophia loved the glorious pictures and perfections of the stately room, which presented exactly the fit setting for her life.

That life I soon found was as strenuous as ever. It began at an early hour with Mass in the Chapel of La Muette. This she always attended. Then from the moment the Chapel door had closed behind her, she seemed to be always seeing crowds of people, either in their houses or in her own. A merciful pause came during her afternoon hours spent with Cecile. But often the busy day was followed by a large dinner-party and evening reception. I could not wonder at her frequently feeling exhausted.

She had promptly achieved great success as a hostess. Her social genius, which had always won for her such desirable friends in England, proved to have the same magnetic force in Paris, although there she had to forego the assistance of the racy eloquence of her native tongue. On one occasion I remember how she set a group of ribald young English guests shaking with laughter by decreeing: "We are both French and English gathered here. Let every one talk in his own language! That will be best!" and immediately proceeded herself to discourse volubly in fluent but faulty French. Sophia quickly won the friendship of her husband's friends by what they described as "her hospitable kindness, unlimited graciousness, great and unwearied goodness, the brilliant activity of her mind, and the noble simplicity and valiant strength of her character."

Her husband was not behind his guests in his appreciation of her charm, and supported her modest description of herself "as a great success in France!" He described the impression which she made by her manner of receiving and entertaining their friends as

"Combining the dignity of a very *grande dame* with an absolute simplicity of manner, appearing in the eyes of all, what she really was, both intellectual and good." Sophia certainly enjoyed her salons, and enjoyed the assurance of her success as hostess of the brilliant company who frequented the hospitable afternoon tea-table, dinners and evening gatherings at La Muette.

It was delightful to me to see how eagerly this large circle of friends and relations enjoyed my sister's friendship, though occasionally I own to having wished that she was not quite so popular, when I tried in vain to get her a little to myself.

Two sharp contrasts must doubtless have recurred to her many times, when she compared her Paris and London years. Brilliant as were the Paris salons, they missed the interest of those of our London circle, which drew their inspiration from the presence of the great parliamentary leaders, Cabinet Ministers and statesmen. The circle to which the de Franquevilles belonged was as entirely cut off from intercourse with members, past and present, of the French Government, as seagulls are out of sight and sound of the deep-sea sharks and rays. Then, although Sophia was busy from morning to night in Paris, because of her lack of strength and other considerations, none of her hours were claimed for service analogous to the classes, committees and other lines of religious and philanthropic work to which she had devoted herself so zealously in London.

"When I am in France," she would say to me, "I am more happy and feel more like at home at Bourbilly than at Paris. I can't bear any big town for long, unless I am really able to work in it for the poor. However, that can't be helped. And also, Society for Society's sake, does not really satisfy me. In old days politics, etc., seemed to make reason and use; and then I enjoyed enormously the pure Society fun; but in Paris it seems just only Society."

As she said, this sense of differences did not shadow life at Bourbilly. There she delighted in identifying most of her interests and occupations with those of her beloved Blackmoor. They reflected happy memories ; they linked her to the past.

Sophia to The Lady Laura Ridding.

“ November 12, 1907.

“ I’m *very* sorry to leave Bourbilly. I can manage something of a life there, and this time I read a good deal with intense enjoyment, metaphysics and philosophy which refresh me most—and history. I re-read dear Aubrey Moore’s Essays : ‘ Science and the Faith ’ and ‘ Scientific and Philosophical.’ Each time he satisfies me more. He’s wonderfully little dated. Then at last I am literally as much at home with the villagers at Bourbilly and round as at Blackmoor. It is touching how they turn and welcome me now. I get too many kisses from the old women ! but even the men talk out to me, and I have learnt how to help them, and now they like me to talk to them about God. I’ve started a clean and Christian newspaper, *Bien du Peuple* (I mean ‘ by starting ’ that I circulate it, persuade the people to take it), for the paper almost all have is Freemason* and full of evil, with a very clever agricultural receipts page. *Bien du Peuple* is equally good in that way and is Christian and Republican, and has a sale of 12,000 in Dijon, which is wonderful, since Dijon is well worked by Socialists and Freemasons.”

Sophia to The Lady Laura Ridding.

“ La Muette,
“ January 16, 1908.

“ Thank you for that treasure, that beautiful photograph of the beautiful monument ; † it blesses my room and refreshes me all through. If one really knows

* See note, p. 274.

† The monument of Bishop Ridding by Mr Pomeroy, A.R.A., in Southwell Cathedral, unveiled there November 14, 1907.

and loves, it is certain that death eventually gives one a more continuously flowing communion and fellowship in the life of our Lord. It must be, I think. But anyhow now all my hidden springs, my fountains, bubble up (out of the life of God, of course), but in my people who have died. Perhaps it is to help me here, as had I not been exiled, I might not have been so thrown on them; just as in a practical way, and from no *culte*, I have found the help of the Saints in their prayers. Anyhow I am so grateful for it. And George helps me so much. . . .

"Queen Victoria's 'Letters' interest me greatly. I chuckle over Lord Melbourne! He is delicious; now I see his protest as to 'The Christian Year' as most characteristic. 'A sad pass have we come to when religion intrudes into private life!' Franquet says his estimate of Her Majesty is immensely heightened. We have been having, as usual, on returning here, dinners of men, Members of the Institute and the round of Ambassadors and diplomats and all their wives; and, as always in Paris within a week, digestion-calls follow, so that I've had talks with many of the interesting and clever men in Paris (always Government apart); and these, several of whom are reading the excellent French translation of H.M.'s 'Letters,' are all profoundly struck by her character, ability, work and *will*! I confess I rather pity Prince Albert, don't you? The visits have been *immense* from December 30, beginning with near relations on to less and less near and to friends and acquaintances, the calls of the *Jour de l'An* took up from one to seven! I really had almost a whole head just before Christmas, but I have now lost it! I had one great treat. I was very much run down, so I coaxed Franquet to let me go to Bourbilly for Sunday, December 15. I knew that being quite alone would be good. It was like new life to me; and to their surprise the family recognized it so. The people now in all Bourbilly and many in Vic-de-Chassenay and many in Thostes now treat me just as my own dear Hampshires did. It makes all the difference to me. It makes a joy to me. Now if I don't see them between November and July it means no one (except the curés) who are in touch, so to say, with God to

be in touch with them, and the curés don't and can't see them as independently.

"(It is not really strange when one remembers that God has and does often use very earthen vessels, even cracked ones! that He should use me; and I expect success, which means I am sure of God, and the triumph of the Cross.) So I coaxed Franquet to let me go. It takes most of Saturday and Monday travelling; and being alone rested me. To be quite alone with only the other world I refused servants. The *regisseur* and wife live in a tower part of the house. It has a separate outer stair, but I can get to their threshold by a passage in the house. (It takes only five minutes about.) Otherwise all the ghosts of the past from 1100, and I had the house to ourselves. My rooms with my photos and water colours and books are joys. Sunday was fine and a roaring wind. I walked to ten-o'clock Mass at Vic, the parish church, about three and a half miles off and saw people there. I was picked up on the road by a cart and back at one, lunched, and at half-past one set out visiting Bourbilly (twenty minutes off only, but very straggling). I was back at half-past six to my tea, having visited every one of the twenty-seven houses and seen every man, woman and child. You may imagine my happiness. Their welcome was touching. They all were so pleased and understood I came for them. Then, after a huge tea, I meant to read and fell fast asleep, till Madame Creusot awoke me at nine for my supper. I returned to Paris thoroughly refreshed. I shall go again if Chantal * comes in February. Then I hope to go every Sunday to help the people back to the Easter Communion. The Bishop of Dijon is simply A 1, and he has already awakened Dijon; and his clergy and ours at Vic are struggling with new life; but the difficulties are infinitely more than in our English country parishes. Freemasonry is now rampant and must be fought tooth and nail. Now I speak out in the country and that is what the people need. It is not the Republic that the Church is against, but Freemasonry.† . . . God leads and enlightens me step by step, so that all

* Madame Schaeffer, daughter of the Comte de Franqueville.

† See note, p. 274.

which seemed so hard and difficult and against the grain is now simple and easy; and now it is so to me, it is so to others here too."

Whilst I was in South Africa in the autumn of 1908 to the spring of 1909, Sophia's letters came to us laden with various domestic and political news, and flaming with indignation against the Education Bill produced in England by Mr Runciman (Minister of Education), and against the proposals of "Compromise" on the subject of Religious teaching in the schools.

During ten of the twelve years of my sister's married life, the cauldron of English politics seethed and bubbled. She was always straining her eyes in vain endeavours to peer through its fumes so as to get sight of its contents, but the space between her and England made her efforts useless. "The longer I am here in France," she once remarked, "the more I see how impossible it is for one country to understand another." I think this conclusion applies with equal force to citizens of a country who are living outside of it; they cannot focus the true perspective of matters viewed by them from too far a distance.

Sophia fired numerous letters concerning the religious and political problems of England to many English magazines and newspapers. On this occasion, she sent out to us at Pretoria a copy of the January, 1909, number of the *Nineteenth Century Review*, which contained an article contributed by her: "Peace or a Sword? Some Reflections of an Extremist." "No really healthy peace," she wrote, "is possible without absolute truth. Confusion is not charity. We all desire peace, provided no sacrifice of principle is involved. The Nonconformists accept Cowper-Temple teaching as sufficient. The Church of England cannot." This was her conclusion of the whole matter. In her letter to me she added: "It is well that England should be warned. Dr. Clifford's

undenominationalism is the seed of all we suffer from here."

An absurd anecdote concerning Sophia's political ardour amused her friends about this time. At one of the London dinner-parties at which she was present, an unfortunate Bishop found himself sitting between her and an ardent Home Ruler. This lady and my sister discussed Ireland so excitedly that their heads met across his plate. The Bishop was hungry, and he found himself confronted with the embarrassing dilemma, either of lifting his fork to his lips, when he knew that he must certainly put it into one or other of the mouths arguing before him, or of lowering his lips to his fork, when he must unavoidably kiss one or both of them!

The summer of 1909 found our South African party in England, Willie having had to return home on a hurried visit for consultation with the Imperial Government over the South African Constitution Bill, the instrument for accomplishing the Union of South Africa, an achievement he had done so much to bring to a successful consummation.

We all gathered once more at Blackmoor, whence Sophia wrote on August 30—

"Willie is so busy I see little of him, but that little is a joy. He and his four children, son-in-law and grandchildren and Maud are all so perfectly happy together; and Father and Mother would be just filled with content. These two Sundays at the eight-o'clock Holy Communion, kneeling before the altar with them all, I felt as St Augustine wrote, our lives 'bound up with the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar'—and I thanked God."

CHAPTER X

1909-1914

(AGE : FIFTY-SEVEN TO SIXTY-ONE)

IT is time to speak of my sister's family life at Bourbilly and her relations to her husband's children and grandchildren.

Mabel Howick was the member of our family who stayed most frequently at the Château de Bourbilly. She has written her impressions of the place and of the course of life there; these may fittingly find their place in this chapter.

"The Château de Bourbilly is situated in that part of Burgundy which is known as the Côte d'Or. It lies to the east of the main line to Dijon, and yet some distance still from the lowest foothills which gradually mount up into Switzerland. An unexpected depression in the plain reveals a long narrow valley with thickly-wooded slopes on every side, and green water-meadows bordering the stream at the bottom. There is a great feeling of repose and remoteness from the world pervading the place, somewhat in the same way as can be felt in many of the Scottish glens; and indeed the pine trees which predominate in the woods immediately round the house increase this similarity.

"Near one end of the valley, and some two hundred yards from the stream, stands the house. It is a large white building, parts of it dating from the thirteenth century, and it runs round three sides of a gravelled courtyard, great iron gates completing the fourth. At each corner of the castle is a round turret, of the 'pepper-pot' description, and the whole is surrounded

by a broad-terraced rampart, below which the ground falls away indicating where the moat once was. After the French fashion, there is no garden proper. Rough grass comes right up to the entrance and to the ramparts, dotted here and there with a few large beds of flowers, and clumps of trees amongst which cattle are tethered. The kitchen garden lies to one side enclosed by a wall.

"The castle had its part in the stormy history of Burgundy. It was originally a royal demesne, and has successively belonged to many of the Burgundian families; but what certainly gave Sophia the greatest pleasure to remember, was the fact that the house and surroundings were closely connected with St Jeanne Françoise de Chantal. She was the wife of a Baron de Chantal who reigned at Bourbilly in the end of the sixteenth century, and her sanctity was renowned throughout Burgundy.*

"Undoubtedly Sophia drew great inspiration from the story of St Chantal's life. She loved to think that she was praying in the same chapel, walking in the same woods, and visiting the same villages, as the saint of three hundred years ago.

"In 1913 she wrote from Bourbilly—

"Just as people ask my prayers and I have asked for prayers, so now that I am alone and cut off, by instinct, when I want intercessory prayers I ask the Blessed Virgin (who is, whatever any one may say, head and shoulders above every other creature however saintly) and St Catharine of Siena, and St Chantal and St François de Sales, to pray for such and such an object, and *they do*.

"It's not mysticism, and it's just this—that we are one great family, and while time lasts those here and those there do most by prayer and its helping influence. It's *the work of the Kingdom*. There is no muddle or competition in my soul. God is so much beyond and above all and every one, and yet more and more so much nearest to me."

"In the eighteenth century another distinguished lady was châtelaine of Bourbilly, viz. Madame de Sévigné, who was the granddaughter of St Chantal. She lived a great deal at Bourbilly, and many of

* She was canonized by Pope Clement XIII., 1767.



CHÂTEAU DE BOURBILLY.

her letters were written from thence. After her death the castle began to fall upon evil days, and there was only a small part of the building in any sort of repair when the Comte and Comtesse de Franqueville restored it in 1867.

"Sophia was always particularly happy in her Burgundian home. 'I always feel,' she wrote to Lord Stanmore, 'that Bourbilly is more something like real home than I have felt anywhere since my exodus. I really love this place; and in indescribable little ways it gets to me much more homey and comfortable.' She loved the country, and was a good walker, revelling in the endless woodland paths. A keen enjoyment of colour and appreciation of all beauty were among her strongest characteristics, and the wonderful autumn tints on the vine-clad hills and along the poplar-bordered roads, with the blue eastern hills as a background, were a perpetual and increasing joy. Burgundy in the autumn is a study in blue and gold; with its strange mediaeval fortified towns with brown roofs of a beautiful tint and its châteaux dating from the ninth century onwards, it is a country full of romance; and Sophia delighted in it all.

"Sophia placed her impress upon garden and rooms. Before her arrival, no flowers were grown at all, but she lost no time in stocking her kitchen garden with her favourite autumn flowers, phloxes, verbenas, sunflowers, etc., all full of the flaming colours of the vintage months. She banished the bouquets of artificial flowers which adorned the salons and filled all the rooms with great nosegays of fresh flowers always arranged by herself.

"Her own room was a great square chamber lighted by two very deep-mullioned windows built into a twelfth-century wall of two yards' thickness. The east window looked upon the court, beyond which gleamed the valley of the river *Serain* and masses of distant trees. The west window looked on to fir-trees and a little green hill. The parquet floor was covered with rugs, the walls and chintzes were red, and against the large mahogany bedstead stood a very long bureau where she always did her writing. Opposite towered a big stone Renaissance chimney-piece, surmounted by a carved coat-of-arms

and with great chests of drawers ranged on either side. In the recess-bookcases of the west window Sophia's books lived ; her couch, where she read and rested, was drawn up beside them, and the walls of the room were covered by her battalions of family photographs, engravings and water-colours.

" Her days usually followed the same routine : namely, chapel at half-past eight, after which came breakfast for everybody together downstairs. Then visits to the kitchen garden and orchard, and consultations with Myot, the gardener ; letter-writing and a second time of prayer in the chapel before the mid-day *déjeuner*. The afternoon was spent in long thirty-to-sixty miles drives in the automobile with her husband, excursions or visits to friends in the neighbourhood ; then on their return, tea on the terrace or in the great *salle des gardes* with its mediæval furniture of tapestries, old armour and coffers. After tea, romps, games and reading with the children ; or if she was obliged to rest then, she played with them after the eight-o'clock dinner. Prayers in chapel ended the day. On Sundays the old curé, Abbé Emery, officiated at services in the chapel. He used to drive about his parish with a little donkey, nicknamed by him his *Vicaire*. He became deeply attached to my sister, and when she was dying, he besought God to spare her life and to take his aged life instead.

" It was not only the curé who learnt to value Sophia's friendship and help. She won a remarkable position for herself in the countryside. Distances between the châteaux are considerable, but motoring brought many neighbours within reach ; and although at first there may have been some surprise at her English ways and imperfect French, she soon made many friends of all sorts and conditions. Not only was she welcomed and loved by the traditional friends of the family, but she visited also some of the bourgeoisie of the neighbouring town, whose political and anti-clerical views had hitherto rendered intercourse with the de Franquevilles impossible.

" She persisted in ignoring political differences as a social barrier. One day, soon after her marriage, she called at the house of some Government official

in Semur. 'Is Madame X. in?'—'Madame is dead,' was the somewhat damping reply. 'Never mind, I will see Monsieur,' said Sophia.—She was ushered in, and Monsieur X. arrived. 'I am Madame de Franqueville, and I have come to make your acquaintance.'

"But, Madame —, perhaps you do not realize that I am not on speaking terms with Monsieur de Franqueville?'—'That does not matter in the *least*. I am English! I do not pay any attention to politics, and I want to be friends with every one.' Monsieur X. could not resist her, and she made firm friends with him and his family, and always saw them when at Bourbilly.

"But the most remarkable achievement of her country life was the relations which she established with the village people.

"No one who is not familiar with the politics and conditions of rural French districts can realize the barrier which a century of republicanism and peasant proprietorship has set up between the château and the village. In addition, at the time when Sophia first came to live in France, the wave of anti-clericalism was at its height. No employé of the Government dared have any intimacy with those who did not share the fashionable hatred of the Church; and as a great many of the peasants were employed on various kinds of communal work, the obstacles to be surmounted were very great. So intense was the feeling just then, that literally a postman dared not be seen at Mass, and no one wished to be thought on good terms of any sort with such a well-known Christian family of the *ancien régime* as was that of the de Franquevilles.

"No member of the family had ever been in the habit of visiting the village people. It was not expected—it was not desired. The villagers owned their own houses for the most part, and were aggressively independent. Sophia, accustomed to the different relations of English country life, and having always counted the Blackmoor people amongst her most valued friends, felt from the first that she must alter this state of things.

"She deliberately set herself to break down the

barrier. The chaff and gibes of her friends and relations had absolutely no effect. She called upon many of the village people, and was at first very coldly received, but this did not discourage her in the least. When any one was ill or in any trouble, off she went to see them. It is a primitive part of the world, and medical aid somewhat far to fetch. Sophia kept a stock of dressings and medicines, and was indefatigable in the care she gave. One old man who suffered from a bad leg was visited by her daily for weeks for the purpose of dressing the wound.

"On another occasion she heard of an old man, anti-Christian, a very bad character, being desperately ill. She went there and found him, as she thought, dying. She asked him if he would not like to see a priest, but was met by a curt refusal and the request that she would go away. Nothing daunted, she knelt down by his bed and prayed silently. 'What are you doing there?' asked the sick man. 'Praying for you,' she answered. He grunted to her to leave him in peace. At first he was surly, but by degrees his eyes opened wide with astonishment. 'Why do you do it?' he asked. She explained that she really cared for him, which was an entirely new and incomprehensible idea to his mind. In the end, after she had knelt beside his bed 'praying for him, with him, by him—against his will at first, for three hours,' he asked her gruffly to bring the priest. Without waiting for him to change his mind, off she flew and walked the two miles to the curé's house. He could hardly believe his ears, as he knew the man's character; and began by declaring that he could not go to such a scandalous character, who had never in his whole life entered the church. On Sophia's insistence he yielded, and said he would go round in the morning, it being already very late. But she was adamant. 'You *must* come *now!*' she said, and she took him back with her there and then. She waited outside; and after some time the curé returned and told her that the dying man had made a full confession and asked for the Sacrament, which he had administered. Sophia arrived home with a thankful heart about midnight; thankfulness which was

doubled the next morning, when she heard that the man had died during the night.

"Acts like these, her absolute unaffectedness and the real pleasure which she felt in talking to these people, did succeed in thawing their reserve. They acquired the habit, so common to her friends, of telling her all their troubles, knowing that they would find unfailing interest and sympathy."

One touching instance of the friendship she won may be given. When in Semur, eight miles from her home, Sophia often entered the church to pray. One day the poor woman who had charge of the church linen, ornaments and chairs, said to her: "I have been so struck and helped by the way in which I have watched you praying, that I long to know you." Sophia and she had a long talk in the sacristy, which ended in my sister promising to come and see her whenever she could do so. Marie Valotte was a simple, deeply pious woman, whose devotion to Sophia grew to know no bounds. She looked on her as a real saint, and a touching friendship grew up between the two, with visits from Sophia when at Bourbilly, and correspondence when at La Muette, which continued till the death of the church caretaker.

The summer months at Bourbilly always brought Sophia the great joy of filling the house with children. She had a genius for entertaining them, and her room was always the scene of a series of tea-parties to china animals, the rendezvous for listening to stories, and the greenroom on the occasion of charades being acted. In all acting and games she took a prominent part, and was never happier than when surrounded by her husband's nineteen grandchildren.

Mercédès de Gournay (a granddaughter who had just grown up at the time of my sister's death) sends me the following recollections:—

"I wish that I could speak of Sophia as I desire to be able to do. My impressions of her are above all in my heart and the thought of her last year.

What will always remain with me will be the remembrance of an affection, a presence and watchfulness ever near me—of a kindness showed always to everybody, so that each child was absolutely certain of being welcomed and listened to with an interest which found nothing unsympathetic. She was open to all, and tried to understand everything. She listened so attentively, almost humbly, to all that we said. I have never met with any one who had the sense and respect for other people such as she possessed.

"I only once took part in the comedies at Bourbilly, in the part of Esther. She used to give herself so much trouble, took such scrupulous pains in preparing and inventing everything: the pigeons, the coffer of the lawn-tennis rackets, the dish and her huge paper-knife, all for Eastern 'properties!' I think she herself made King Ahasuerus' beard out of wool. I remember how, when she played with my little brother Pierre at 'Napoleon,' she always consented to Wellington's being conquered! I don't think any words can express the patience and devotion which she had for us, or the warmth of her love."

When the mother of Mercédès* was prostrated by a long and painful illness, Sophia became a temporary mother to the whole family. She chaperoned Hélène, the elder daughter, in her engagement and marriage,† saw about her trousseau, and tried in every way to surround her with happiness. She placed the twelve-year-old Mercédès at school, and watched over her there with loving care. Mercédès remembers the delight which Sophia took on the occasion of a prize distribution, when she was called upon to bestow one of the prizes upon her. She also remembers Sophia remonstrating with the *Surveillante* against a rule which forbade the little girls to plait their hair at night (presumably lest wavy hair should

* The Comtesse de Gournay, daughter of the Comte de Franqueville.

† Hélène de Gournay married the Vicomte de Michel de Grand-sagne on February 2, 1909.

minister to their vanity). Sophia explained that "she cared so much for the children's beauty!" an unaccustomed plea both to the astonished Sœur and to the delighted young listener! Pierre, a little seven-year-old boy whose health and childish disposition needed unremitting motherly care, was of very special interest and joy to his step-grandmother. When he had been some months under her care she was delighted to observe a real improvement in his health and in his struggles against his passionate temper. She prepared him for his confirmation, loyally observant of the tenets of his Church.

On February 14, 1911, she wrote—

"I have been Pierre's only religious teacher the last eighteen months. I did all till a month ago, and I now continue to prepare him for his first Communion. I say his prayers with him and help him in his confessions, and am in constant communication with the Père (who is Recteur). He goes to the Jesuits' School close by here. It all works so far as smoothly as if I was a R.C. The moment will come when Pierre will know I am called a 'Protestant' and cannot communicate with him—but I am sure God will arrange it all."

In 1913, Sophia wrote to Mabel Howick from Bourbilly—

"Last year was very happy here, and this year even more so. The children are enchantingly gay, and they were all as happy as the day is long. The lawn-tennis court which I got made is splendid, and I have now made a real croquet ground near by, and am putting up a swing, etc., and so young and old are within reach, and we have splendid shade and plenty of seats. There is a whole garage full of bicycles, and fishing and motoring, etc., *all* I want, except riding and shooting, for which I long and pray! and, if it's good for us, Franquet will certainly let me have both.

"The boys are very happy here, and do go out shooting in hope and faith; and I even (what would Lolly say?) allow stray squirrels to be cooked and

help eat them ! because I can't bear the boys to have no sport. There are thousands of squirrels, and the poor boys have nothing else to shoot. I have really enjoyed these holidays so very much. It's such bliss to have every one happy and gay."

And again—

"It's been such a queer summer, one day hot, one cold, and so on, and the sun so stingy until now that the peaches and grapes did not ripen until October. The kitchen garden and orchard and fruit are real successes. I'm very proud of the vegetable and fruit here, due to God, Myot (the gardener) and lastly me ! There were none before I came.

"Round the moat terrace now it's so pretty : such a success. Sweet-peas are still filling their corner in the *potager* with fragrance, and there is that extravagance of blossom which I described very poetically in one of my 'Mrs Penicott' three stories ! Well, I am glad to have enjoyed myself thoroughly here."

It required some management to keep so many people happy for three months, but Sophia was wonderfully successful ; although, now and then, the boys did think her fussy, as when on one occasion she would not allow an owl and her family to be kept in the bedroom cupboard !

Sophia felt that she had learnt much from her sister-in-law, Maud Selborne.

"Tell her," she once said, "how I often thank her for all I learnt from her in her big wise way of dealing with children. I improve on it a little in my opinion ! but I more and more feel how children are sacrificed to the outwards, and forced and trimmed up to the detriment of the real fruit. . . . The daily incessant tax on oneself is draining. The only thing I can do is to cosset Franquet and everybody, and try to help the grandchildren to grow up healthily in mind and body."

If a merry understanding was the key to Sophia's relations with her "artificial grandchildren," as she

playfully called them, a sustaining sympathy was that of hers with their parents. Her maternal instinct glowed with a bright hot flame in her heart and leapt up to meet every appeal made to her by the joy or success, need or anxiety, pain or anguish of any of her large family. I have already spoken of her unfailing love and tender care for Cecile, the invalid daughter. She was able by thoughtful arrangements to ease some of her lesser discomforts, to help the nuns who nursed her so devotedly and to bring sunshine and fresh love into her stricken life.

Sophia's wisdom and personal experience proved powerful forces in bringing Marguerite de Gournay through the dark tunnel of her three years' illness into light and recovery. "It's a mercy my health smashed so badly!" Sophia remarked in the middle of the illness. "For, had it not, I could never have understood, and I could not have helped Marguerite. So I am *very* glad I was so bad."

In the spring of 1906, Madeleine Darcy was crushed by the loss of her much-loved husband after a few days' illness. Their devotion to each other was profound, and the pathos of the separation penetrated the sublime words which illuminated his passing, made known to me by Sophia—

"Maintenant j'ai compris que la mort est le plus grand acte, l'acte suprême de la vie, le seul qui vaille la peine d'être venu en ce monde; le chagrin même de la séparation est compensé par l'ardent désir de savoir au lieu de croire . . . je confie tout à l'infinie bonté de Dieu . . ."

Sophia poured out her passionate pity on the poor widow and her children.

"This is as awful an ordeal as is possible in the way of love and death," she wrote. "I did not think I could ever suffer again so much as I have and do in her now. I know every pain, and one's helplessness is complete excepting as regards prayer. And also

I know, know (not believe only) the other life and the triumph of good."

Madeleine found incomparable support in her step-mother's love and sympathy to which she turned as to an inexhaustible fountain of consolation. "Nothing rests my soul like being with you," she said to her.

When anxieties of other kinds, such as few houses can entirely escape in this troublesome world, harassed the family, the contribution brought to the family councils by Sophia's English common sense and clear-sighted intuition was felt by its members to be of great value. Her absolute sincerity, her generosity, her eager desire to use all her power and love for their service, for soothing and helping, and her personal ascendancy won for her a position of sustaining trust among them. Her help and advice were sought by all, and I do not think she ever failed them.

In 1910, Sophia was torn between the call for her presence in France, where her husband was at that time much weighted by family anxieties and illness, and the desire to be with Freda, "that little white soul," as she called her, who was suffering from a fatal malady. She snatched a few days to come over here during the General Election in January of that year, when she combined a visit to Freda at Petersham with canvassing at Bradford for Mabel's husband, the unsuccessful Unionist candidate. A characteristic effort was made by her in special addresses to the tramway employés, given at two o'clock in the night, before dawn.

On June 3, she joined a large family gathering at my Hampshire home to welcome my brother and his wife on their return from South Africa; she was present at Wolmer's wedding a week later,* and she spent the rest of June with Freda at Petersham.

* He married the Hon. Grace Ridley on June 9, 1910.

The sisters' love for each other was very deep, and the link between them held like steel. She wrote to Lord Stanmore from Petersham on June 28—

"Freda has splendid courage, patience and the power of absolute faith in God, and is always cheery when not in too much pain. Franquet is in Paris, and has lots of tiresome business. I ought to return, but he says I can linger on. It has really been hard being in exile during Freda's illness and the political and ecclesiastical anxieties at home, all one loves at stake; so I am thankful to be allowed to remain on. Dos likes having me, and Freda likes his having me. I am absolutely sure of that other life, but all the same, illness and death are ordeals, and it's far worse, far, when the illness and death is another than when it is oneself; and my heart chokes for the boy."

The end of my youngest sister's life of sunny holiness, crowned by the heroism with which she had borne the agonies of her illness, came on October 4. Sophia and her husband came to England for the funeral, and returned home two days later.

Sophia to The Lady Laura Ridding.

"Bourbilly,
"October 18, 1910.

"BELOVED LOLLY,

"You know we left Tuesday last. It seems a lifetime. However, as it was my duty to return (as Mary arranged to remain with Dos), it is lucky we arrived here without any mishap. We only heard on board, after starting, that the long-threatened railway strike had begun, and that no trains had run that day from Paris. At Boulogne we found a train forming, and we had a very slow journey, as cut signals and broken rails were feared and found. The Paris station was full of soldiers and outside was cavalry. We had meant to stop for business in Paris, but Franquet was told that the 4 o'clock (arriving Semur 11 p.m.) would be the last train

in all probability run, so off we bustled, and had a crawling journey—soldiers were everywhere—and we reached our beds by one o'clock. The monstrous thing is that the only grievance is that orders are given according to the judgment of the superiors without consulting the men. Every jack-man! loaders, porters, etc., are told to insist on nothing being changed without their approval! Immediately after the strike began most dastardly crimes were done: stopping cattle trucks and killing on the spot, pillaging goods, tearing up rails, cutting all the wires, killing engine drivers, etc., who persisted in working. This one line is really different, but, as the men tell us, they are terrorized. However, now they are called out, mobilized, have a badge to wear as mobilized and work under order of police, they have more courage. Everybody was puzzled by the freedom with which money flew about among the strikers, and how, all at one moment, automobiles were flying about giving orders from the leaders. Briand has had leaders seized and papers; and now vile plots to blow up bridges, etc., are found, and that £25,000 was sent from Germany by Socialists there to the *Bourse de Travail* for this strike! Think of Jaures accepting this from Germany! However, I hope this Government will now act firmly, and that England will take warning and re-enact the Taff Vale decision as soon as there is a Unionist Ministry. *Chasse aux renards* (as picketing is called by the trades unionists) has here reached the point of murdering in cold blood non-union men.

... The Bishop of Dijon is coming this week for two days or so. I am glad; I like him so very much. How are you? Your presidentship of the National Union of Women Workers' Conference must have been a strain. Even in my humble little work of just nothing I feel it all I can do to keep on. For the moment I feel as Top and Bobby said to me when Lady Salisbury died. 'We have no legs!'—'No,' added Bobby, 'we have legs but no insides to them,' and it's been so long and so short; and this last half-year of certainty of the time being very limited, never seeing Freda, never being able to speak, to have intercourse, has been dreadful. Now I am thankful

for the darling, and must just hang on in prayer for Dos and that dear little man."

Sophia to The Viscountess Howick.

"October, 1910.

"Freda seemed so near and so happy that 'I wished I was there,' as the 'Pilgrim's Progress' says, and indeed I get so very homesick sometimes for them there, that whenever my time comes please remember I shall be so happy. But at present I have plenty to do—and I am so very glad I feel the two worlds one and the life everlasting springing up in me here, as our Lord promises. I am so thankful I *enjoy*, and though my earthly tabernacle shrivels and withers and decays, my inside is hopping about, and younger and happier than ever. Learning is so interesting."

Sophia always regarded the coming of old age as a trivial side issue. All that mattered was whether it presaged spiritual decay or spiritual development. She wrote of it—

"The only thing which really makes oldness, in its ugly evilness, is sin. It withers and licks one up like a flame, and at times I have realized the awful scorching, drying up, witherings which, prevailing, must make Hell."

And: "I suppose when one is old one ought to care more in measure, and to mind things less, and to be armoured from outward touch; but I don't think one is. The actual things which affect one are different, but that is all. The gain of years is the assurance, the witness, they give to God and love and truth and patience."

And: "Though to the end of one's life one may have times when one can only cry out of the depths, yet when once one has somehow seen and felt and touched, as it were, the Powers of the Life to come, and tasted the Power of God, and the Blessed Lord is part of one's life—after each knockdown, or bad time, or new struggle and sacrifice, I find one has stepped on in the dark, made way, strengthened, and

that new blood is in one's veins, and that wonderful hope and love of God and Power and happiness wells up, and I bubble over inside with happiness to give still. Isn't that nice and wonderful?"

It was, in a great measure, this everlasting youth which produced such a vitalizing effect upon those with whom she came in contact. "I feel as if my soul and heart had wings!" she once wrote; and she occasionally bore up other souls with her in her heavenward flights.

In 1911, death brought another great sorrow to my sister in the loss of the noble Bishop of Dijon, Monseigneur Dadolle. He had been ill, and was afterwards sent to recruit at St Raphael, then was hurried away out of the heat; and when he was expected at Bourbilly, where Sophia was prepared to give him her most careful nursing, he died of a fever on May 22.

"I am really stunned by his death," Sophia wrote. "It is utterly incomprehensible, only fifty-four. A man who seemed necessary to France and this diocese. He is one of the most remarkable men I have ever known in my whole life. There was not in him a single flaw or inequality. His holiness, intellect, judgment, common-sense, delicacy, tact, heart, simplicity, strength, courage, independence, all marked him out to inspire, lead and govern—and he was not afraid to govern, and yet had nothing arbitrary in him. And his absolute truthfulness of mind, as well as of word and act, his greatness of mind, was to me like Father. It gave a sense of absolute freedom and instinctive unerring response to God. One felt he was led by the Holy Ghost, and that his whole being was poured out in a service of worship to his Lord and Saviour. To poor Franquet he is irreparable; they enjoyed each other. I believe Monseigneur Dadolle will help us still—more than ever—but it is an inestimable friendship and help removed from our tangible enjoyment. And to me it is particularly a loss, for he and I got on so well,

and he understood my position. He did—and he shared his anxieties and hopes for the Church and souls with me in a way which helped me. He said once to me that he felt I cared."

Sophia wrote an inspiring sketch (under the title of "A Great French Bishop") in the October number of the *Dublin Review*, 1911, of the character and life's work of this son of the Church, who so clearly recognized the unique call to service of this twentieth century, that he said one day to his dear friends at Bourbilly—

"If God had given me the choice, I should have chosen the present time; it is a wonderful time, wonderful revelations on all sides; and never did God need His servants more. I am grateful to be here now, to try to do something in the breach."

I think some of the happiest consolations which came to Sophia in those troubled years of 1909, 1910 and 1911, were from the distinctions achieved by Willie's elder sons: *i.e.* from Bobby's scholarly triumphs at Oxford* and from Wolmer's political triumphs at Newton-le-Willows and in the House of Commons.† "Water to a thirsty heart," she described the great election success at Newton.

She was very unhappy over English politics. She described herself as "night and day thinking and praying over them." She wrote concerning the Veto Bill and Reform of the House of Lords to Lord Stanmore on December 29, 1910, saying—

"Don't despair as to politics. I don't and won't. It is sheer treachery to do so. 'God sitteth above

* The Hon. Robert Palmer, May 11, 1909, gained a 1st Class in Moderations, and was 3rd in order of merit for the Newdigate. December 10, 1909, he was Honorable Mentioned for the Ireland. 1910, President of the Union. August 8, 1911, he gained a 1st Class in Greats.

† Viscount Wolmer, December 7, 1910, was elected M.P. for the division of Newton-le-Willows. March 11, 1911, he made his Maiden Speech in the House of Commons.

the water-floods.' The only duty is to stand firm and resist. I should resist when I *knew* good and right were at stake, even if all the country voted for the wrong or foolish. But in the present case the country has not. It is a false jerry-mandered affair, and those who yield are traitors, cravens, fools! My deepest regret is that the clergy—Church of England and Roman Catholics—the younger clergy, teach Socialism. I wish I could have a pulpit, and I would tell them how wrong they are. To me it seems so few now really believe in God and Good as meaning Truth, Justice, and in the facts of His truth and government."

I fully believe that, had that pulpit been available, Sophia would have occupied it without hesitation if it had enabled her to sound her voice loud enough to reach the seats of the mighty in Downing Street and the Palace of Westminster. Two letters under her name appeared in the *Times* * during the crisis of the third reading in the House of Lords of the Parliament Bill. They were written to support the "No Surrender" policy, urging the Lords "to stand firm at all odds for the trusts and rights of the British Constitution, for all that made England great in the past and that ensures the union and greatness of the Empire in the future." "Here, over the water, alone in my anguish, out of the turmoil," she wrote, "I am equally struck by the simplicity of the issue and the confusion of ideas prevailing thereon."

This unhesitating readiness to direct the steps of the six hundred members of the House of Lords in the way in which they should go was a characteristic phase of the audacity which occasionally usurped the legitimate office of my sister's courage. She was thus at times liable to be betrayed into rash blunders, but I think that she amply atoned for such lapses by the achievements of her courage, by the power of her spiritual strength. Of this she had such a vital

* The letters were dated July 22 and 27, 1911.

spring within her soul, that it forced its way through all obstacles, rushing into strange and unexpected channels. It enabled her to face vice, disease and death with the fearlessness of a Valiant-for-Truth, and, by her steadyng faith, to bring purification to an infected mind. It was remarkable how she, whose sense of proportion in ordinary things was often faulty, had attained a deep insight and remarkable strength of judgment in things pertaining to the spirit. What braver or more illuminating advice could be given than the following, as to the treatment of a sly morbid child? "Make him open. Never shut up his bad side, but learn it and understand it, and help out the abscess. Be glad to learn what is *really* there, for everybody has bad stuff as well as good, and all that matters is to *understand*."

No conventions restrained my sister when she thought that the innocence of children was imperilled. One day, when she was walking through the Quartier de Grenelle, her wrath was kindled by the sight of some detestable picture post-cards exposed in a shop window. She entered the shop and reprimanded the shopkeeper fiercely for the iniquity of polluting the minds of children with such pictures. The woman was furious at my sister's impertinence. "Then of course you have no children of your own!" retorted Sophia. — "Indeed I have!" snapped back the shopkeeper.—"Then you wish to corrupt them! to destroy them!" Her urgent expostulations and appeals to the conscience of a mother awoke the stagnant feelings of her hearer so effectually that, from that day, the evil things disappeared from the window.

Several times she struck blows of this kind in behalf of the young and innocent.

Sophia was unable to understand the timidity which makes its victims shrink from speaking of the Church's teaching, of their own religious convictions or of God, in their ordinary talk. She proudly owned

her allegiance to her Master in whatever company she might be, in absolute disregard as to whether they considered it convenient or not. She never suffered irreverent remarks in her presence. Once, at her own dinner-table, she felt compelled by her loyalty to God to offend against her inclinations of courtesy and to leave the table with passionate protest against the profane words of one of her guests.

Her loyal spirit gleamed in contact with things human as well as divine. On two occasions at Versailles it burned forth in rebuke to a guide for his irreverence in the Chapel and in championship of the slandered Marie Antoinette. A party of Americans were being shown the Queen's Library, where Sophia (who knew every room in the Palace) was lionizing a nephew. Suddenly her attention was caught by hearing the official guide remark with a sneer: "You see from the character of the books here what sort of woman the Queen was!" Immediately, to the astonishment of the Americans, Sophia plunged through to the centre of their circle with a loud cry of: "Ce n'est pas du tout vrai!" and took over the guidance of the party, explaining that Marie Antoinette's librarian was a notoriously bad man, but that she herself read nothing, and that the slanders against her morality were absolutely unjustified.

One more instance of her valour in accepting the challenge of injustice, on behalf of those who could not right themselves. On a certain morning, the Minister of the Government, who was Head of the Army Pensions Department, was surprised by a visit from an English lady who refused to give her name. She explained that she had called upon him because an inconceivable instance of political persecution had come to her knowledge, which she could not even now believe to be true; although it was asserted in England by some people that such acts were perpetrated in France. She had hitherto refused to believe them; but, if this particular case, of which

the Comte de Franqueville had told her, proved to be true, she should feel it her duty to proclaim that the worst accusations had not been exaggerated. The case was that of an old soldier, just eligible for pension, who had had his fair claim refused because he was now in the employment of a political opponent of the Government ; and the poor man was stupefied by the intelligence. The Minister assured her that she had been grossly deceived, that such persecution was impossible ! Then his visitor produced her trump card : the employer was the Comte de Franqueville, and she was the Comte's wife ! The embarrassed Minister promised that the error should be immediately rectified, and bowed out his English inquisitor. Within a week the error was rectified to the surprise and delight of the pensioner, and not less of Sophia's husband and his family, who were not possessed of her sublime assurance, which made her always assert : "I expect success !"

Sophia to The Lord Stanmore.

"Château de La Muette,
"February 14, 1911.

"So few seem to me to be sure of their faith in religion or politics, and so few to really believe in what is called the Supernatural. It is true, I suppose, God has made me touch it and come into its vibrations in a way which I gather is not a very common experience in France, though at home it always seemed natural ; but then I think it is that I try (at least when I try) to use it, when I really pray, pray, pray—that is, you understand, not ask only, but cling to our Lord, besiege (so to say) God our Father, trust absolutely, make acts of faith and hope, beseech the Holy Spirit—then all becomes possible, even relatively easy ; all seems to happen by itself. I have felt situations and causes and individuals desperately difficult ; and then often wondered why, for solutions came, and so simply, that I felt as expressed himself to me lately a discoverer, Monsieur Gaumont :

‘Depuis que j’ai fait l’expérience, que je suis arrivé, que j’ai trouvé, je ne comprends plus pourquoi j’ai passé onze ans à la recherche. C’est simple comme lait !’ Well when he said: ‘Je ne comprends plus, etc.,’ I felt, ‘that is just how I feel about what is called the Supernatural’—all which happens in the Kingdom of Grace is stupendous; and yet, now it seems to me, while infinitely gracious and loving, just as natural as Mother’s and Father’s love; and as the sun and all that is lovely in the world.”

Sophia to The Lord Stanmore.

“January 26, 1912.

“There is an intimacy (if I may without impropriety use the word) between the Soul and God—or I should say, the whole of one and God, which to those who have never experienced it cannot be realized. To those, who have neither faith in God nor even any imagination, such an intimacy is an impossibility, and its assertion, by those who know it, is a delusion or a fraud in the minds of the uninitiated. Once one has lived continuously in such an intimacy and fellowship, which is like seeing, hearing, touching, all that is supposed to divide the natural from the supernatural disappears, and one lives and moves and breathes in the life everlasting, and understands our Lord’s words in their present tense; and one knows at once by the surest instinct whether such an one has ever seen the Lord or no.”

The following letter may be given as her receipt for obtaining serenity in politics:—

Sophia to The Lord Stanmore.

“ Bourbilly,
“ May 27, 1911.

“I feel very much as you do, and my heart is welling up in bitter tears. But by steeping myself in the Psalms and Prophets, and (in consequence of reading Lord Rosebery’s ‘Chatham’) re-reading passages in Hume, Lecky and Macaulay’s Essays bearing

back on the Chatham period, and by re-reading Shakespeare's Historical plays, I feel much better. You will say, 'Nineveh and Babylon, etc., from the prophets, and Jerusalem, etc., are not cheering associations'; and in a way it's true, but only in a way. To begin with, the Old Testament always tonics and consoles me. To me there is in the Old Testament a sense of an abiding home, of family, of the enwrapping Fatherhood of God. Then what shocks many nowadays is a positive tonic and fillip to me! I like strong expressions, curses, when suitable! and 'hip and thigh,' and all that view of the exceeding evilness of sin; and the mercy of its being arrested; and one's knowledge of the natural stages of man's education and experience prevents to me any difficulty in primitive justice and customs. If an exact *milieu* could be struck between the *Oedipus* conception and the Steadists and Winston Churchill squeamishness,* it would be best; but if one must choose, I am sure the *Oedipus* view makes for righteousness and the Winston Churchill code of criminal law does not."

In looking back across the three years before the war, a few scenes stand out in my recollections. One was a singular expedition which Sophia and I made with my brother-in-law to Montmartre one May evening in 1912. After a long search for the right street, we came upon a hastily erected rough stand, near which our automobile took its place. Presently a French regiment changing barracks, its band playing a martial tune, marched by. This was the sight we had come to see! Crowds had assembled with enthusiastic delight at the unusual spectacle. I learnt that the anti-militarist views of recent Governments had, of late years, led to the War Ministers' forbidding their own soldiers to march in daylight through the Paris streets for fear lest a troublesome patriotic flame might be kindled by the sight. The new War Minister had removed the restriction, but, nevertheless, secrecy as to the route had been kept on account

* This refers to the incident of the Dartmoor shepherd.

of the possibility that anti-militarists might start a riot. My brother-in-law beamed over what he rightly interpreted to be a significant sign of a revival of patriotism.

Another recollection covers the pleasant weeks which Sophia and I spent together at Royat in 1913. She was then feeling keenly the loss of her dear friend, Lady Layard, and she was also troubled concerning the long and painful illness of her maid. Her maternal care over all her household, her anxiety for their bodily and spiritual welfare were as ardent as ever, and had won her years before the lively devotion of all her French servants. In a letter which she wrote to me before we went to Royat, after telling me of her anxiety for her maid, she said—

“The servants are all angelic. In that my life here now is so happy. We have as nice a set as one could wish. Their unity and devotion to us and infinite kindness to Elizabeth* are quite beautiful. It is heart-breaking to see her suffer so.”

What I think was so justly appreciated by the responsive French minds was my sister's eager encouragement (such as she gave to Myot, the gardener at Bourbilly), her confidence in whoever she knew deserved trust, her sympathy in whatever sorrow or suffering befell them, her readiness to give a lead when special efforts were demanded of them. As, for instance, in a very rainy autumn at Bourbilly, when the dam of the great pond threatened to give way, Sophia appeared in the unaccustomed part of a water-nymph, armed with a spade, and led all the foresters, gardeners, and men-servants in the work of repair, piling earth on the weak places, and digging away with the energy of a treasure-seeker.

Marie, a former servant, recently poured forth to

* Her maid who was ill.



SOPHIA MATILDA PALMER DE FRANQUEVILLE, 1910.

a friend of mine the story of her devotion to Sophia. She had fallen ill in her service. "I shall never forget," she said, "the kindness of Madame la Comtesse. She was goodness itself, and treated me more as if I was of her own family than a servant during my illness. The daily living with her and loving her has affected my whole life."

At Royat I had opportunities of seeing my sister from day to day, such as I had not had for a great many years. In appearance she had developed, rather than altered, from the eager, impetuous girl of forty years before. She retained the same grace, the same elastic stately carriage, the same air of personal distinction. Her long illness of 1901, and after, had set its ravages upon her face, had left a hint of pain which occasionally betrayed itself, but it had not robbed her of her enchanting smile which showed in delightful flashes the lines of her strong white teeth, neither had it dimmed the alert searching glances of her eyes. Her hair was as thick as ever, and had taken a very becoming grey tint. Time and sympathy had carved upon her face those lines which make an austere setting for nose and mouth, but which are only seen upon the faces of the unselfish and the holy.

Sophia returned from Royat to Paris on the last day of June, 1913. The following day, at the request of one of the family, she paid a visit to a clairvoyante. She walked there in a shabby waterproof, with nothing about her appearance to lead the clairvoyante to suppose that her unknown visitor was not an ordinary British tourist passing through Paris. The interview was very curious. Telepathy probably would account for most of the messages given, but if by telepathy Madame Q—— was able to view Sophia's mental photographs, certainly some of the descriptions were startling likenesses.

• The clairvoyante has proved wrong in many of her predictions, but not in the portent which she saw

always before her, the vision of which seemed to obsess her with its horror—

“Après la guerre se sera mieux, mais la guerre sera partout l'Europe, le monde presque. Des morts ! hecatombes de morts ! Socialisme y sera pour beaucoup ; mais, après, le Christ triomphera. Tout sera mieux. Ne vous découragez pas.”

Certainly Sophia's dread of socialism had not led her to dream of trouble such as these words foretold as looming before us. She thought that sporadic revolutions might break out here and there, but of the war which in a year's time was going to drench the earth with blood, she had not the faintest foresight. Telepathy does not explain the mystery.

Besides the usual summer visit to England, Sophia came over to be present in Winchester Cathedral on December 1, at the unveiling of a memorial tablet to my father.* We were at that time in the midst of a strenuous campaign against the Government Bill for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Welsh Church. Sophia was as eager to give her help as in the old days of her Church Defence work in Winchester Diocese. Two days after the Cathedral Dedication Service, she delivered an interesting address to the Winchester Church Defence Workers on the results of disestablishment in France.

She had already written an article for the *Nineteenth Century*† with the object of removing the misconceptions of English Churchmen as to the position of the French Church, which she found they believed to be rejoicing in ideal conditions as the result of its impoverishment and separation from the State.

* The sculptor was Mr F. W. Pomeroy, A.R.A.

† “Disestablishment in France and in England.” In No. 439, September, 1913, of the *Nineteenth Century*.

In the beginning of March, 1914, although she was very tired with many weeks' anxious nursing of her husband through a serious illness, she came to London and delivered what proved to be her last Church Defence address on the same subject. She spoke with great power and pathos. After giving instances of the crippling effect of poverty and of the growing scarcity of curés on the French Church, and the danger to national life in the alarming increase of divorce and juvenile crime, she warned her audience that the advocates of disestablishment in England had no conception of the difference between living in a country like England, where in all public functions and ceremonies God was acknowledged as our Father in Heaven, and one like France, where, with all the noble national qualities, public and private life were permeated by a bureaucratic system administered by an anti-Christian State.

The following letter, written for the use of a Church Defence Study Circle, gives some of the points upon which she laid stress:—

Sophia to The Lady Laura Ridding.

“ La Muette,
“ April 8, 1912.

“ The Church situation is this, and, as you will see, so different from the Church of England, that disestablishment and disendowment in the two countries cannot be compared. But there are several lessons to be learnt: and the chief is that when the Concordat was framed, it was framed in good faith: just as in 1880, when *écoles laïques* were started by men, such as Jules Ferry, the intention was undenominational Christianity. God's name remained, and vague religious teaching was allowed to be given by the teachers who wished; and as the first set of masters and mistresses had been trained in Catholic schools and training colleges, it was twenty years before any marked change in the anti-religious sense was

observed. Meanwhile the training colleges had been remoulded and their whole spirit changed, and they sent forth teachers without exception anti-Christian and often with no morals. The name of God is now not to be found in school books. Even in La Fontaine's 'Fables' and other classics it's changed; and, under the same titles, the text is changed in history books, etc., giving the children not only a godless, but an unpatriotic, education. Well! exactly the same will happen in England, in time, if once the Church schools are suppressed.

"So as to the Concordat: Napoleon meant it to work as it did work for very many years; but from the beginning of the present régime, 1879, the Concordat was worked against the Church. For instance, as you know, the whole of the revenues of the Church having been confiscated in the Revolution, Napoleon made a compromise in restoring the Church and made a *Budget des Cultes*, in which the payment of Bishops and clergy was undertaken. This being the case, no new parish could be made without leave from the Government, who had to find the payment of the additional curés. For many years additional parishes were made as wanted; but for over thirty years none were allowed to be made; and, in consequence, after the *Séparation*, the first thing Cardinal Richard did was to ask Franquet to be President, and make a lay Committee for building new churches. Since 1905, twenty-two have been built, with parishes, of course, lodgings for clergy and hall and parish-rooms, where men, who would not come to Mass, come in crowds to hear lectures, missions, etc., and are thus got hold of. These churches are all in overgrown parishes, chiefly the suburbs and artisans' suburbs, where they have grown up in heathendom. But these churches and buildings are all only *let* to the clergy. They are owned by the Society of Laymen, who have mortgaged them as soon as built.

"Then another fact quite different under the Concordat and with us in England: here the Bishops and clergy could never meet, never hold a meeting, never speak in public, without leave from the Government! which leave was never given. The appointment of

curés of all *towns* lay with the Government; of the *villages*, with the Bishops; but the Government always refused to appoint zealous clergy as Bishops or curés; and the names of men for Bishops which the Government sent to Rome were Erastian, and such as Talleyrand said, with : '*surtout pas de zèle.*' Rome often refused and suggested other names, and they went backwards and forwards, and at last a compromise was reached. The last few years it was even worse; and, when the Concordat was ruptured, seventeen Bishoprics were vacant because the Pope could not agree to the men the Government wished! Well! the Pope's bishops are a very good set. All missionaries, and absolutely devoted—many really able men.

"The great drawback of the rupture lies in the immense money loss; not only stipends, but also the disendowment of *all* trust monies; and the fact that, in many poor dioceses, this loss is starving the work.

"Then there is certainly in many dioceses a great and increasing deficiency of clergy. It's not a bit owing to the Church, for there is an ever-increasing number of vocations in Religious Orders; but the main supply of secular priests comes from the peasants, and now the parents won't send their sons into a career which does not even secure bread and boots! Where there are, here and there, very remarkable men like Monseigneur Dadolle, people are influenced to send their sons; and then, if they prove to have vocation, they go on to the *grand séminaire*, and again, if they still have vocation, take orders.

"And now comes a crucial point which cannot be brought home too strongly in England. A married clergy would be impossible under disestablishment and disendowment (as the two go together and must). In France and Italy, a married clergy would have no influence at all on the country; but in England, it would be disastrous if, in country villages, the clergyman's wife ceased. Under his endowment here, in many dioceses, the priest has £12 a year, and food in kind is given by parishioners. Nowhere has a country priest more than £36 a year. In towns,

£80 to £120 is riches. In Paris the curés have £150 to £300.

"Owing to the *Séparation*, not the dimmest reference to God is made on public occasions, and in events, such as the explosion of the Dreadnought lately, when the sufferers were not allowed a Mass, and only lay speeches were made."

After the London lecture Sophia wrote on her return to La Muette in a very exhausted strain:

"I am over-tired. I've never felt so bad for years, but it does not matter so much now, as I am much more able to manage in such conditions. London really refreshed me, and, had we left as settled and gone to Nice, I think I should not have been overstrained; but all our plans are altered, and every change sets my heart palpitating and my head aching, and prevents sleep. Still I've really got on splendidly. I had Franquet to nurse and look after, ill, from September 10 to February 8, and Pierre de Gournay from February 20 to March 2."

Her husband had been very seriously ill during the previous five months, an illness to which he succumbed more readily on account of weakness left by an attack of pneumonia under which he had suffered in 1913.

Eventually, however, the delay which had kept them in Paris proved to have been a providential hindrance. For, on March 22, 1914, the thirty-eight years of patiently borne suffering of Cecile de Franqueville ended, and she died holding the hand of the step-mother who loved her so deeply. While Cecile's sister, Madeleine, declared that Sophia had been "more than a mother" to her, Cecile's father bore testimony to her having "ceaselessly enveloped the sufferer in the tenderest care of the most devoted of mothers." He likened Sophia to Madame de Sévigné, who once assured her daughter: "J'ai mal

à votre poitrine"; for Sophia's acute sympathy did actually make her suffer with the sufferer, and by that power it broke down for her the barrier which isolated Cecile from the current of life, and enabled her to join touch in love and understanding.

My last sight of Sophia at La Muette was in May, 1914. She was better in health, but acutely disturbed over the condition of affairs in England. The attack on the Welsh Church, the Kikuyu Controversy, Biblical Criticism, Modernism, all excited her wrath. In the distracted state of politics, the antagonism between classes fanned into flame by threats of a vast Labour strike and of Civil War in Ireland—in all these things, she saw Satan in fierce conflict against us. She traced his handiwork also in France, where he had apparently hypnotized the attention of the entire nation upon the approaching murder trial of Madame Caillaux to the oblivion of all matters of national importance. She thought that he had cast an evil spell over all the capitals of Europe, which was manifesting itself in strange bacchanalian orgies of extravagance, pleasure-hunts, crazy dances, indecent fashions, nudity, and which was driving his victims, in restless vanity "like the whirling dust; as stubble before the wind." Her engrain distrust of democracy made her ask if such a frenzy of abasement was the result of the loosening of old allegiances.

All these uneasy fears tormented our intercourse in those lovely May days. Now, four years after, I look back upon those last frantic weeks of peace, and I see how they were "rapt along in a raging tornado," precursor of the storm, earthquake and fire which were so soon to rend the earth.

Sophia and her husband visited England for the last time in July. The war clouds were gathering in the East; King George was in vain striving to reach a compromise by a Conference so as to prevent civil war in Ireland in the West. The outlook was

so threatening that my sister and brother-in-law hastened back to Paris on the 29th.

Less than a week after their return, France was attacked by Germany, Belgium was invaded and Great Britain had declared war on the aggressor. The conflagration of Europe had begun.

CHAPTER XI

1914—1915

(AGE: SIXTY-ONE TO SIXTY-TWO)

AFTER a short delay at La Muette, Sophia and the Comte de Franqueville went to Bourbilly, which was within the *Zone Militaire*.

“I have no spark of courage for those I love, and I pray that none of them may be in danger,” she wrote; but Madeleine Darcy declared afterwards that her courage and cheerfulness were wonderful all through those black early months of the war, when Bourbilly seemed more remote than ever. “She comforted every one near her, although God knows how her heart suffered from all the frightful things that were done, all the more that it was great enough to love both our countries almost equally.” Her French family came and went all through September and October, and the Castle was kept going entirely by women, except for one old man-servant, all the rest having been called up. Her letters (and she wrote frequently to us) were of unusual interest, for they were full of facts, criticisms and rumours, which did not find their way into our English newspapers. Much of her information would be inadvisable to print now, but the following extracts do not fall under that description, and are of value as a chronicle of my sister’s experiences during the first year of the war:—

Sophia to The Countess Waldegrave.

"La Muette,
"August 5, 1914.

"Your letter was a joy. To-day for the first time since our arrival a week ago, I have time to write, and I am so tired, it wants all my energy to write to you and Dos. The Psalm 'My heart even in the midst of my body is even like melting wax' expresses my feeling. Never in all my life have I imagined anything so awful as it was from the 30th to when we were sure of England. Rumour persisted that she would not act. . . . To show how utterly unexpected this war is, let it be known that Comte Christian de St Seine was given three months' holiday from July 18, his first holiday (beyond a fortnight) for four years! He is, or was, in Norway; no one knows his address, and telegrams shoot wildly after him, as he is called to a splendid command of a battleship. It will break his heart losing it, but I fear his place will be filled.

"The explanation of the madness is Ireland, the general unsettledness which prevailed in England, the expected huge strike. Here in France, the apparent blindness to the situation, the Socialist majority in the Chamber and jargon of Jaures, Hervé and Co. until the war broke out; business was very dead, and Paris streets all up, mending and rearranging tram-lines all at once (alas they still are—timber, iron rails, stones all to hand for barricades!), and fear that the Three Years' law would strengthen the army each year more. Then in Russia, a great strike was looming; and their army and navy steadily improving; so, the sooner the better for beginning war. But, I am told, Ireland is the real key. Germany thought we could do nothing.

"It's miraculous the unity here, and most touching, and everything is being organized for every need; martial law is declared, and the anarchists or *apaches* will be dealt with summarily. The few remaining nuns who were to be expelled this very month (St Vincent de Paul) and their schools closed, have a reprieve, and are *asked* to remain to nurse!

"If we get safe to Bourbilly on the 11th we can

all be together and cheer others. Anyhow, I bless God that Cecile is in Paradise. Of one thing I am sure: Great Britain, Ireland and France will come through purified and strengthened; and even if we do not see it here, we shall from the other life, and thank God; and all the dear children who live on will understand. We must not think too much of the awful things which may happen to ourselves and others. It will be gloriously worth while. 'And when these things begin to come to pass, then lift up your heads, for your salvation draweth nigh.'"

Sophia to The Earl of Selborne.

"La Muette,
"August 13, 1914.

"We are still here. Franquet offered this house to the *Croix Rouge*, but having no *chauffage centrale*, and several rooms and galleries with stuff and velvet on the walls, it's impossible for a nowadays hospital. The *Gouvernement Militaire* of Paris has requisitioned the garden and garage for a *parc aux moutons*, and as these new tenants arrive next week, we remain to receive them. Some fifty thousand *bœufs* and thirty-five thousand *moutons* are being collected in Brittany and West of France; and the Commissioners for provisioning Paris flattered themselves that, at least, all the thirty-five thousand could feed here! their calculations being based on La Muette as it was twenty years ago! (The plans have not been corrected up to date.) Such a mercy we mowed early this year. That and abundant rains have given us now the most beautiful grass: it's a miracle. We are lifting up branches of cedars, tulip trees, catalpas, etc., to save their suffering; the shrubs will, I fear. Really it's a great piece of luck that the Government has billeted the sheep here, as twenty soldiers and fifty shepherds are to be quartered here, and this house will be well guarded. I went to a Committee of our *Seizième* yesterday. It was rather amusing. We were all like the Millennium, lions and lambs sweltering together in stifling heat, not a window open! The Mayor and officials, seven curés, a pasteur, a rabbi, and nuns and sisters of St Vincent de Paul in rows like swallows

on Christmas cards, Jews, notaries, and every shade from blood-red to purple-blue in politics and birth. The curés announced that half the offertory of next Sunday should go to this fund (which is generous, since they have so many poor), and it was received enthusiastically. I enclose a copy of *Guerre Sociale* to show you the miraculous change in the anti-militarist leader Hervé, who has enlisted and is at the front and nearly fifty years old."

Sophia to George Biddulph, Esq.

"La Muette,
"August 15, 1914.

"The moment we arrived here (from England), July 29, we were besieged by people wanting help one way or another; and also for a few days there was a food panic caused by idiots buying up food and emptying the stores. In consequence, the crowds stormed shops to find nothing. This has now been regulated admirably. *No prices* are allowed to be unduly put up, and a Committee has been organized by the Government to rule the market prices. Many of the shops were obliged to close for two or three days until reprovisioned, as the markets had been plundered on Saturday and Sunday last by bands of *apaches*. Now order is restored, but the provision shops are mostly open from ten to twelve a.m., and six to eight p.m. only, as there are so few left to serve and fetch and carry. All horses have been taken, except a few cabs, which are crawling out like winter flies, and provisions are fetched by hand-carts. The National flag is hoisted from every shop and house. We have two red, white and blue, one darling Union Jack and two Jeanne d'Arc over our entrance. Paris looks gay; and never have I seen or felt these twelve years what I see and feel now. One nation, one heart, one will, one brain. And the facts, that France is not to blame, that the brutality of the Germans has frightened every one, and that the Socialists are more or less in power, have made the position simpler, as the Socialists are frightened. The Minister of Justice has ordered the keeping open of the schools, and appealed to teachers to remain in

charge during the war, and has guaranteed costs: so that the children, whose fathers are or will be on service and their mothers trying to earn, may be cared for. Every German is expelled. The hatred which has burst out against Germany is really awful. The truth is that the Government treated warnings with contempt. . . . All over Paris a Milk Company 'Maggi' was established which undersold. Again and again we had warnings. No one believed, though it is indisputable that these shops were placed always near some roof junction of telegraph wires. Well! when the Germans made sallies (before war was declared) on French territory, all these shops were suddenly closed (on pretext of milk shortage) and the *personnel* departed from Paris in the night, leaving some one in charge. These were speedily despatched after the rest, and the company's manager pursued and stopped at the frontier. Papers and money were found on him bearing out the fact of the company being all German, and showing arrangements for cutting telegraph wires and spying. It is, as Madeleine says, miraculous how the Government has pulled together and come out. For the time nothing is thought of but the common danger and common duty. At Jaures' funeral all spoke for service. All said Jaures would wish them to fight. In the Chamber yesterday I hear it was magnificent. It may be very awful, it may be long, but in the end victory will be for the allied defenders of Liberty from the tyrannical aggression of Germany and its catspaw. France is magnificent. One heart. One mind. One will."

Sophia to The Earl of Selborne.

"August 25, 1914.

"Franquet is very calm and full of submission in the strength of knowing God and being sure He never make mistakes, and that whatever we suffer will be best, 'that we may be partakers of His holiness'; and though I realize, as I did not, the misery of this war, the untold misery ahead, I have a source of extraordinary joy—you understand—to be thoroughly proud of one's Country and Empire again and to be thoroughly proud of France. We

are in need of such comfort, for the news is not reassuring. What really makes this war a surprise to me is the ignoring of all rules of war by Germany, and the awful cruelties inflicted on harmless villages and individuals. At first I did not believe; but alas! one is now forced to believe: wounded soldiers, Red Cross nurses, priests, common travellers, returning *eye-witnesses*, all have stories which curdle one's blood. As François* says: 'the Germans were cruel enough in 1870 (so Franquet told me), but now they are rivalling the Goths and Huns in the Middle Ages.'

"... Now we are being flooded by ruined Belgians. Their despairing, dumb suffering hardly need their first-hand evidence of the monstrosities committed right and left, except in Brussels, where the United States Minister warned he would repeat any ill conduct. There they were only insulting: spoiling parks and flower-beds, riding over them, dragging Belgian officers at their stirrups! and dressing up a bear's cub, which follows the Guards, as King Albert, etc. . . . The meanness of tricks and traps, using red cross and white flags, and then attacking even doctors, priests administering, ambulances. When one sees the *system of this war*, lying and treachery and cruelty, one can't wonder that their soldiers are so cruel often."

Sophia to The Earl of Selborne.

"Bourbilly,
"September 3, 1914.

"We arrived yesterday and found the children brilliantly well; also, our former old curé established as chaplain. The usual little crowd of retainers to receive us; most in tears! Poor things! the newspaper reports of burnt villages and general brutalities are having the effect Guillaume (as he is called universally in France now) intends. However, we cheered them up, and I shall be able to see a good deal of the villagers here and in the villages round. We have some stores luckily, but very little sugar, and salt rather limited; petrol lamp oil scarce, and, alas! the carbure of which our acetylene gas is made, can't be

* The only son of the Comte de Franqueville.

had. In a fortnight we shall be without means of lighting from dark to dawn, except a lamp apiece, until the lamp essence is used up. We have plenty of meat, bread, butter, jam, vegetables, fruit; and, above all, potatoes were never so plenteous. Now about the journey. Though we had a carriage reserved, we were told to be in it at 10.30 a.m. for 12 noon. We were. The Gare de Lyon was an extraordinary scene. Literally, the road and approaches blocked with people, squatting on their parcels and rolled up mattresses, waiting to leave Paris. The queue to take tickets overnight (not one is given for the day you travel) is such, that people take up places overnight to take tickets next day and to travel the third. The corridor in the train was packed to suffocation, and people were fighting to get into our carriage. My heart longed to stuff in the children. However, we had an officer doctor and a cavalry officer (whose legs were badly hurt by his horse who was shot, falling so as to pin down his master, who lay there many hours unconscious, and was pulled out. The wounded who can travel are shipped off as far as possible for fear of the Germans). His wife also came in our carriage, and we had Babette de Montalembert* also, who had been to say good-bye to her husband, and was returning to her children at La Roche near here. We did swelter! (Ten people) Madeleine, Babette and the doctor sat or stood in turns. Henri Darcy stood all the time. As the poor officer was in much pain, Elizabeth acted guardian angel and arranged him to the admiration of the doctor. For ten hours we stopped at every station. The officer was interesting. I asked him if he thought the Germans would reach Paris. He said he hoped not, that General Pau's huge effort (it must be going on now)† might break them. He said the strength of the German army was awful; and that every detail showed preparations of years brought up to the utmost perfection of finish to date. 'Our men,' he said, 'are mostly in uniforms more or less worn. Not a German who is not rigged out from top to

* The Comtesse André de Montalembert, granddaughter of the great historian.

† This was the Battle of the Marne.

toe in all absolutely new.' He was in extraordinarily good spirits and longing to be back in it, but his eyes had such a strange expression of startledness and horror at times; and often as he talked, he shuddered. He said he had never imagined anything so heart-rending as the devastation wrought by the Germans. The country where they pass is left burnt bare. They set fire by grenades and petroleum wherever they can. He'd seen village after village light up towards evening, and at midnight the sky looking red-hot for miles. They kill animals and destroy all, their object being to demoralize, strike terror, and hinder the Allies by roads crowded with refugees, and to make famine. He spoke with intense admiration of the British. At one station, an army doctor came up and spoke to the doctor travelling with us, and told him he had been stopped going to Etain, in North-East France, where he had been called for *Croix Rouge* work, because the Germans had just hanged the *Croix Rouge* doctor and burnt deliberately alive nuns nursing, whom they locked in and then set fire. They must be possessed of the devil of devils. Our wounded officer said: 'The German officers had such complete mastery of their men, that these atrocities could only happen by order.' 'Et les ordres de Guillaume sont: "Sème le terreur! detruire tout!"' The curés are having a bad time in the north-east. Several shot because, 'Il est l'âme de leur courage.'

"These and other horrors *done in France* are not in the newspapers, as the authorities fear panic."

Sophia to The Countess Waldegrave.

"Bourbilly,
"September 6, 1914.

"I agree with every word you say. We need this awful lesson. One was too pleasure loving. There was a general tendency to speak and think of God as some one good-natured and unexacting! and of human nature as essentially (not potentially) good, and of sin as non-existing. All was rotting. And one thing which gives me hope is, that God's visitation has been realized. The turning to God in France

is very remarkable. Churches in Paris and country towns crammed every day. Whole regiments communicating before battle and confessing at every turn! in the train, corners of railway stations, in camp, anywhere, everywhere! Many priests have died in battle who were doing military service, and some have been shot by the Germans in cold blood. . . . If the Germans do come hereabouts, I trust we shall remain, only sending off the children, rich and poor. However, God may not let them come. Anyhow I pray: 'O God, prepare us by Thy Grace for what Thou art preparing for us in Thy Providence.' Daily Mass and Compline are an immense help, and to have this dear chapel and the Blessed Sacrament. I like the Litany of the Saints: it makes the company of Heaven seem so near to me! I try to have a few rules, and am reading the Prophets again, they are wonderfully understanding, and the dear Psalms; and Father's Memorials: such an atmosphere of God. It's not fancy; I have unbroken fellowship with him and darling Mother, and I know them better and better, and Freda, George and Meme, and ever so many more we love who are gone. The villagers are bitter over the war. They can't understand how it can be, as they were told by their dear Freemasons, Socialists, Radical politicians, that an army was needless and the Germans were angels, so they are woefully surprised. Z—— here sows ideas as to the curés having sent money to the Prussians and being spies!! I point out how ungrateful the Prussians are in shooting the curés!"

Sophia to The Countess of Selborne.

"Bourbilly,
"September 11, 1914.

"Dijon is in an indescribable confusion. Homeless families continually arriving from round Chalais and between Paris and Les Larmes, where (round La Roche) fighting has been and is going on: poor creatures, of all classes and kinds, camping everywhere as they arrive, until sent on beyond Lyons. The *misery* I understand now. I never imagined the general misery which this criminal war of the Kaiser

would entail. I thought there would be appalling death-rolls and sorrow, but never did I dream of the ruthless, odious, abominable cruelties and torture the barbarians inflict. I saw some one yesterday who'd had a letter from an *aumonier* prisoner in Strasburg, who says the orders from Headquarters are: 'No mercy, burn and kill everywhere and no distinctions, ambulances, clergy or nurses!' but, when once in prison, the individual jailers are left to act; and kind ones are kind, brutes are brutal. The courage of the French common soldiers is marvellous (of course British are! that never surprises me), but these men are not, as a rule, soldiers by choice: they are in a hurry to be cured and get back. Their accounts of these day-and-night battles are awful. Comparatively the Romans and Sabines had a very comfortable time! There are 19,000 to 20,000 French priests in the army; of these many are giving ambulance work, but many are just fighting. All the Seminarists over nineteen are mobilized; and with Jesuits, Dominicans, Marists, Assumptionists and Franciscans, who returned from exile and enlisted, 60,000 are in the field, monks and priests. Such magnificent deeds some have done: 'Je suis prêtre, je ne crains pas mourir! Allons!' and some, who were turning before an awful rain of mitrailleuse, followed the young priest to death and victory, for they got the guns.

"The end seems sure; but meantime I begin to fear France (all but seaboard and extreme south) will be ruined, burnt, and as many murders and deportings as in Belgium and North-East France, where whole villages, by order, are swept off, men, boys and girls, to Germany to do harvest. The German soldiers are allowed to drink, clearly. I can't believe, if sober, they would do such horrors. An officer now at Autun in hospital was very badly wounded, and, when conscious, had both his hands cut off by a German soldier! Wherever they go, they cut off little boy-children's and boys', of all ages, right hands in the villages. Two cases we know of, by witnesses, of babies at their mothers' breasts. One mother defending her baby had her breast sliced off. It's really as if the devil possessed them."

Sophia to The Earl of Selborne.

“ Bourbilly,
“ September 17, 1914.

“ An Abbé (professor at Dijon for German, English and History) goes every year for one month to a German monastery to work at translations; and he has told us year after year of the way the other lodgers (all German clergy) and the monks talked of the inevitable end of France, as a promise of Germany, for its good! He did not care. He didn't believe them! but he thought this last July, when he was there as usual and had to fly, that they all accepted the responsibility of this war marvellously calmly, and were surprised at Belgium objecting to the German army passing through. . . . The priests are dying right and left in the French army. In the lists after sous-serjeant or adjutant, or no title but just 'of such a regiment,' comes 'de la Compagnie de Jesus' again and again, Dominican, Vicaire, Franciscan, etc., of such a parish, all died fighting; and curés, who were shot doing ambulance! It's magnificent! Every day in the list there are several. The Bishop of Meaux is a real trump. The prefect, sous-prefet and Municipal Council left. He and his clergy took their place as well as caring for the wounded. Nothing was organized, and he did all. He got the poor women to help him, and he sent to Paris by a motor for doctor, nuns, chemist, etc., and, like Joseph, gathered in all the food he found left in houses and shops, and dealt it out to the remaining population, chiefly poor women and children. General French's reports are thrilling; he has endless tact and selflessness. The British troops are immensely admired. How splendid about South Africa! I rub it into the French and Belgians.”

Sophia to The Lady Laura Ridding and The Countess Waldegrave.

“ Bourbilly,
“ September 24, 1914.

“ We are very anxious as to this wearying long battle, or series of battles, of the Aisne; every day

no news, except that it's harder than that of the Marne! Costs more men; and *that* cost in killed, wounded and missing, 80,000! (Sept. 29th.) There is an awful announcement in to-day's paper: 'Le General Stenger, Commandant la 53^e brigade d'infanterie allemande, a addressé à ses troupes premier ordre du jour, leur prescrivant textuellement de ne plus faire de prisonniers et de passer par les armes (shoot) tous ceux qui tomberaient entre leurs mains, isolés ou en groupes; et d'achever les blessés, armés ou sans armes; les Allemands ne doivent laisser aucun Français vivant derrière eux.' This is a fine prospect! You'll see, as the Germans retreat, they will massacre and destroy *all*. Here in France their devastations far exceed the amount in the *Times*. They have begun again bombarding at the shell and a tower of Rheims Cathedral still standing. They are fiends."

Sophia to The Viscountess Howick.

"Bourbilly,

"September 22, 1914.

"We are on our last rations of gas, and soon shall be of lamp-oil. Imagine this house with no gas at all except in kitchen and pantry. For dinner, our old lamps making darkness visible! It's not cheerful. Every one is very good-tempered, and one of the children said to me: 'Vraiment nous devions jouer cache-cache tout le temps.' My sacrifice is very limited so far! I've forsaken sugar and get up very early, for *me*, to have more time to pray and read Bible and to be punctual! I have been for a week.

"But the anguish one lives in for others is the furnace; and I wonder if you have the same demon haunting you with fear of not still trusting God whatever happens, public or private? I know it's a temptation and I will not let myself look ahead, only go on and on, shooting acts of faith and hope. . . . The *Te Deum* was composed by Bishop Nicetas in the third century, when Arians filled the Church and the savages from the North-East poured over the civilized world. He saw everything crumbling—faith and civilization—and he sang *Te Deum*

Laudamus, etc.; and each time I sing (inside, luckily for my hearers) I think of Nicetas and take courage."

Sophia to The Lady Laura Ridding.

"Bourbilly,
September 30, 1914.

"Three weeks ago there arrived in a village some twenty miles from here, ninety-two orphan girls in charge of four nuns, accompanied by the gardener of the deserted convent, who would not leave them—all absolutely destitute. They had come on foot following our soldiers, who, so long as their way was the same, fed them. One day the children walked fifty kilometres (roughly 33 miles). Joffre ordered the evacuation of the orphanages within range of the bombardment of Sedan. In the 'Ordre de l'Armé, Bordeaux, Sept. 19,' in the glorious record of heroic deeds of Generals, Officers, Corporals, etc., comes between a Sergeant-Aviator and a Lieutenant this: 'Mesdames Rigaret, Collet, Rémy, Maillard-Rickler et Gartener, Religieuses de St Charles, de Nancy (ont, depuis le 24 Août, sous un feu incessant et meurtrier, donné dans leur établissement asile à environ mille blessés, leur assurant la subsistance et les soins les plus dévoués, alors que la population civile avait complètement abandonné le village; ce personnel a, en outre, acceuilli chaque jours de très nombreux soldats de passage, auxquels il a servi tous les aliments nécessaires'). These nuns remained under fire, but those of them who went forth with the ninety-two girls (from sixteen to nine years old) needed all the courage and faith God gave them. They all walked on and on for three weeks, until a kind farmer offered them an empty farmhouse (formerly the small Château d'Aichamp) standing on his property—all he could do. With difficulty, by begging among the small poor population (no rich), this company of ninety-seven found bare subsistence. The courage and patience of the nuns and children are splendid. The kind curé of the nearest village feeds them on Sundays, which they spend with him between Mass and Vespers. I was asked to provide food, blankets, shoes, stockings—everything was

lacking; they were sleeping fully dressed and shivering on the bare boards. The scare of their awful experience is stamped on their young faces, for they are now initiated into the worst horrors of this most awful war. Yesterday we went twenty miles to the lonely old château to take the things, and found they had just left on foot and in carts lent by a villager. Poor things! They had only eight miles to go to Sanhier, where we followed and caught them at the Hôtel de Ville, waiting for the *déjeuner* which was preparing before they started by train to arrive at 1.30 a.m. to-morrow at Dôle in the Jura, where is a convent of St Charles Borromeo, their Order. (The Mother-house is at Nancy.) Yesterday at cock-crow arrived four nuns from Dôle on foot at Aichamp to fetch them away, to the joy of the poor nuns there. It was beautiful to hear the children speak of their three weeks' journey: 'all our clothes lasted long enough!' After the seventeen days with the army, they had four alone, begging over lonely country. People gave to them of their poverty, old clothes, etc. Their luggage in the cart was workmen's bundles of old clothes, two iron three-legged pots in which they were to cook on their journey and sacks of potatoes!"

Sophia to The Countess Waldegrave.

"Bourbilly,
"October 4, 1914.

"A dear old woman died last night. I have had to go to and fro to poultice two miles. She was very ill, and imagine our situation. No doctor can come now, as all horses are taken and suddenly, last week, motors were forbidden to circulate! The reason for their suspension is said to be on account of spies who fly by and launch pigeons! Also in the districts of this enormous battle, the army was much annoyed by hundreds of motors coming from Paris to watch, as if manœuvres were going on! All had got special passes through interest, as if on Red Cross work. At last some one on the staff asked what they'd come for; and being told Red Cross, he sent them to the Head of that work, who promptly put them to bury dead horses in districts where fighting had been, but

was over ! And the number who remained to do the work was Nought ! They all disappeared ; and since, a general military order forbids circulation of motors throughout the *zone militaire*, which is nearly all France (except extreme West and South). I think the Allies must be holding out grandly, and Germans will retreat into Belgium, and the great battle will be Waterloo or thereabouts. Belgium is tragic. The Beasts will certainly destroy Brussels before they leave. The pillaging is monstrous. Two hundred German *ladies* (!) came to Brussels to examine the loot and choose lace, jewels, china, tapestry, as the officers could not judge well ! . . . As to this country turning to God, one can't tell. The influence of the priests and monks, who are as salt throughout the army, must be immense. That which seemed an evil has turned out an immense gain, *i.e.* compulsory service of seminarists and clergy ; for just what the asses of Freemasons wished to prevent, has happened, and the clergy are in and in with the laymen, and the priest-soldier confesses in railway stations, corners of fields, or out in the open ; and says Mass before battle, his thin *aube* on with uniform showing below, and his tiny portable altar put on anything, and the Blessed Sacrament always ready for the dying. And several times it has happened that, before a battle or in these long battles, the priest tells all who wish for absolution to cross themselves as he gives it to all : 'Like one arm, the hand lifted and crossed.' The French clergy are dying like flies, but it will again be, the blood which fructifies."

Sophia to The Lady Laura Ridding.

" Bourbilly,
" October 16, 1914.

" Only one of the French Bishops has bewailed as a political crime the taking the clergy from their parishes ; but no one agrees with him. Pius X. immediately on declaration of war gave full dispensation to the whole clergy, regular and secular, to fight for their country, and to every one complete and full power, anywhere, everywhere, any hour, to confess

and absolve and administer the Blessed Sacrament as to the dying, so no question of fasting comes in ; and walking along, side by side, talking leads to confession, and absolution is given as they walk."

Sophia to The Countess Waldegrave.

"October 10, 1914.

"Really since the company of Martyrs of the early centuries of Christendom, never has the world known such legions of heroes. It uplifts human nature. . . . Day after day the French papers publish lists of heroic deeds, really by the hundred now, worthy of the Victoria Cross. In the paper to-day an English officer (no name) is reported as being attended, wounded badly ; and seeing the surgeon start, he said : 'What's the matter ? Oh ! only that !' And when the surgeon asked him how he could possibly fight in such pain as was involved by a malignant cancer and how he was allowed to go, he answered that no one knew ! He'd only been sure of it just when war began and told no one, as he wished to use his last months or weeks for his King and Country ; and the surgeon who repeated the story said : 'The courage and determination involved were unimaginable.' . . . Our curé of Thostes is an *ambulancier*, and he writes that where he was during the Marne, and now, this worse Aisne, there were no intervals longer than two hours, and even then often stray groups of Germans attacked ; and that practically all their work, picking up wounded, sorting dead and living, is done under fire and that the Red Cross is very little protection. It's impossible to keep wounded anywhere within reach of the enemy who do not respect the Red Cross. Of course there are exceptions in German officers and soldiers, but they are *rare* and can't be reckoned on. Of one thing there is no doubt : General Joffre is first-rate, so are Castelnau, Pau, Millerand and Delcassé. The French soldiers are quite magnificent in courage and patriotism."

Sophia to The Earl of Selborne.

“ Bourbilly,
“ October 18, 1914.

“ All is so beautiful, dying death lighting the woods and roadsides with a flare-up of glory. Babette de Montalembert and I stumped the woods and heaths yesterday in real Blackmoor weather, what here is called heavy rain, but is really only Scotch mist. The wild strawberry under the firs is just now like blood. Nature is the natural interpreter of our lives, and here one sees what is going on in its highest interpretation: the lives in death lighting up the Nations. But when one looks at the villages (I do love villages) one's eyes fill. The ruined and burnt villages are always now in one's mind; and yesterday, when we read the *Times* of 15th, and its article on the Invasion of England, one felt sick. . . . In the Commune of Vic-de-Chassenay, population just under 400 (Bourbilly is in it), already five young men are killed, three men badly wounded and the husband of a daughter of the village dead. These dead men mean absolute extinction of their families. The parents have no other sons and are over forty. If the rest gone are killed, these villages will, in a few years, be as Nineveh and Assyria! But one result of the war, I foresee, is a complete reaction as to the immorality of not having children; for in sheer self-defence it will be, and that will help religion immeasurably, as the sin of not having children keeps men and women away from confession and Communion.”

On October 22, the migration to La Muette was made. Sophia wrote from there on the 26th—

“ Yesterday we went to St Cyr to see François. He commands a thousand Bretons, reserve men, and is very happy. He was asked to go to the front by a General, but General Gallieni would not let him go, as they have no man to replace him at St Cyr. He says not a man misses Mass, and many are regular Communicants. They bear very well the hardship of being cut off from their natural lives and homes since August! They are not allowed to go home even for a day, when a wife is very ill and dying.

He showed us the trenches made in preparation for the siege ; everywhere, even to our back door by the Bois de Boulogne, are huge cats'-cradles in barbed wire. Aeroplanes and biplanes were whizzing overhead, and one saw piled-up trees, roots and all, and barricades of paving stones just as we did on arriving Thursday on the other side of Paris. . . . C—B— came yesterday. She had been to Belgium to try to get to her mother in Brussels, but could not get in. She was herself in danger. She heard that all the nuns in a convent in Louvain were outraged. She says not one half is known yet."

Sophia to The Earl of Selborne.

"La Muette,
"November 3, 1914.

"At this moment an aeroplane is rowing over us and bombs may be flying, for I hear awful explosions. No one, except the birds, now pay any attention to aeroplanes. (It's aiming at *us*, I'm sure! It's like a thunderclap over my head.) The opinion in Paris is that in a fortnight the Germans ought to be out of France. May it be so! Bob Cecil* (whom I've seen once) made me a harangue on the demoralizing effect on character of fighting. I stuck out firmly for just taking facts as they are. There was no choice (he, of course, agreed), and, just as our Lord told individuals He was training in new ethics to offer the other cheek, etc., so also, when His betrayal was near, He told His disciples to take common-sense precautions ; and the prompt answer, 'Lord, here are two swords,' always seemed to me to show that they took about their swords just as we do umbrellas—so now this war might never have happened but for the Hague drivels and the idiotic folly of the peace-at-any-price people here and in England.

"The half-measures are guilty for much. But now this most awful war (of which we are only in volume one, part one) certainly reveals qualities which enthrone human nature, and that in a much larger proportion than the devilries of the Germans *by command*. . . . As to the love of fighting, I am sure not

* Lord Robert Cecil.

one man will be found who ever wishes to fight again. They all do it for duty. . . . Did you know that all the material of a bridge (stone piers and all) to cross the Meuse to Namur was ready in German hands in case the bridge was destroyed; and so immediately the bridge was rebuilt in three weeks!"

Sophia to The Lady Laura Ridding.

"La Muette,
"November 7, 1914.

"France is no longer rich. People in England don't realize the awful distress and need in France. Roughly speaking, all the North-East of France to within fifty miles of Paris and down to our part of Burgundy, is ruined. Nothing remains of any industry. Factories and farms all are destroyed and mines ruined. The Germans outdo the palmerworm and cankerworm. Belgium is worst of all; but if you think what it would mean if *all our Home Counties, also all the Midlands and half Yorkshire were absolutely ruined, and villages and towns destroyed.* Also when you remember it's the chief mining district where fighting has been going on, that all the mines are flooded, that all the woollen cloth, blanket and knitting-wool manufactories are burnt; and not a blanket can be had! you'll see what misery is and what an awful winter is in store. The Germans have stolen all private house-blankets in France and Belgium where they passed, as well as from factories.

"The Bishoprics of St Dié, Soissons, Arras, are absolutely *penniless*, and others frightfully hit throughout France. The (fortunately unmarried) clergy have to do on a quarter of their usual pay of £36 a year; while the very poor dioceses which (since the *Separation*) have only given £12 a year, can't give that. The clergy, who were fed in those parts by the poor mountaineers, are getting nothing or little from them. Really one does not know where to turn. I am very glad I am here below; and if God will let me and I have health to be useful, I want to live on many years. Old people whom I loved were such a comfort to me, years ago, from their experience of certainty of God; and now we are old, we can at least be that. . . . I see

some of the dear, dear British soldiers in the hospitals. They are so simple and real."

Sophia to The Earl of Selborne.

"La Muette,
"December 30, 1914.

"Somehow I expect, from an earthly point of view, Christmas, 1915, will be much sadder, more depressing and more trying than this year. But God will most surely fit us each and all for whatever has to be borne. It seems as if everything was in the melting-pot or like a kaleidoscope, ever changing groupings and combinations. . . . In Prince Von Bulow's book, published last year, he says that England could have prevented the creation of the German Navy in 1879, but did not, and that never after could England prevent the inevitable triumph of Germany. I can't believe England could have prevented Germany having a navy. Europe would have yelled, and it would have been made a *casus belli* had Germany and Russia then wished it. It's interesting to see the Germans, now working away with the Flemish (just as the Welsh and Irish Nationalist politicians worked them, and were worked by German agents who also work in India), are now urging Flanders that the moment has come to realize their national aspirations, and offering huge bribes. The German element had been working this the last few years. Now, perhaps, in England eyes may be opened to the deeds of Germans to destroy our Constitution!"

Sophia to The Lady Laura Riddings and The Earl of Selborne.

"La Muette,
"January 18, 1915.

"The published reports of the evil deeds of Germans in Belgium and France, North and East, are extremely mild and only on sifted evidence. Even things I know at first hand are unbelievable in filth, refined cruelty and wickedness. In the French report, the chief culprits in actually named regiments are Würtembergians and Bavarians, equally horrible. In Belgium, the latter were less cruel, and even very

kind, to some French soldiers and Belgians, because of the Queen of the Belgians. Some of the peculiarly meaningless, dirty and disgusting cruelties (which are absolutely authenticated) and awful crimes equal and outdo the Bulgarian Atrocities. I suppose you will see the French Official Publications; if not, I'll send you a copy. I've just seen a spinster lady of the Miss Yonge type, as enterprising and courageous as possible. She is President of the *Cercle* of Jeanne d'Arc, and she and her friends go to and fro in Belgium and North France looking for the missing, seeing prisoners, helping nurse and taking letters. She was thrice made prisoner, but was released. She says the Germans respect the *brassard* Jeanne d'Arc which she wears. She is very diplomatic, and never annoys them. Her success is extraordinary. She is going to Rome to ask the Pope* to obtain permission for her to visit all the German prisons. She says the German sailors are very superior to the soldiers in mercifulness.† She found a very much changed mentality the last time (a fortnight ago) among the Germans in Belgium; no longer cock-a-whoop. She says she saw regiments with grandfather, father, son and grandsons of one family. She says the solidarity is intact, but that the truth of failure is beginning to pierce. She is like some one of 150 years back! but most interesting and perfectly just. Miss Jay (Girls' Friendly Society President in Berlin) tells me that the three hundred English girls detained there till October were told by their employers that, Paris invested, Dover would be destroyed from Calais and 100,000 soldiers put across, and, simultaneously by wireless, 60,000 Germans in London, each with uniform ready, would form a regiment; and so, all over England, Scotland, Ireland!!"

Sophia to The Earl of Selborne.

"La Muette,

"January 28, 1915.

"The general diagnosis is that, considering the circumstances, the *morale* of the army is very good

* Pope Benedict XV., 1914.

† This was before the commencement of the unrestricted submarine warfare.

indeed, but that inevitably the poor soldiers get weary in the soaking mud and wet. An officer told us this week he'd fished out two men drowned in the trenches, nobody's fault. François writes proudly of his 'pères de famille, mes braves Bretons' (Territorials) who stolidly endure untold wretchedness. He says: 'Up to the waist in water! and some days up to the neck!' They have left the first line and its trenches for a week to make roads. The other day he and a few were in a tiny *tout petit* court inside a farm, with an open well in the middle, when an obus shot down and exploded in the well, and not one man was touched! though the ground was rent asunder as though by an earthquake, and the whole masonry of the well in powder. François said: 'It made one feel queer, but wonder, for not a splinter came out!' All disappeared in the bowels of the well. He described their Christmas midnight Mass in a cellar, and his Bretons shouting the *Gloria in Excelsis*, etc., and at the end singing *Adeste Fideles!* And, as their notes died away, François said: 'Coming up and out of the cellar, from the German trenches came to us again: *Adeste Fideles!*' To me, it's a comfort, for, however wrong and responsible the apostles of German world-dominion may be for this world-war, and however shocking the sophisms of Nietzsche and his followers, the individual German peasant-soldier and uneducated lower-class German cannot understand, and are sacrificing as we are! 'Uneducated' sounds almost blasphemy (!) when said of Germans, doesn't it? but it's what they are in the mass, just as other nations are, as to all but veneer learning; and the pride of German superiority only deceives them the more. Now it's unmasked, I realize that *no* German, *none*, are to be trusted outside their own country; for they are soaked from their birth in the doctrines of predestination, and the whole marvellous machinery, which has moulded this nation of peoples into a homogeneous entity, has so shaped, stereotyped, warped their characters, that they all see themselves The Elect, and us, The Damned, if we resist; and, The Mercifully-saved, if we submit. In 1913, the Kaiser reproached Monsieur Jules Cambon for the wickedness and evil influence of

Paris, and expressed his regret that 'he had not taken steps to stop all this French corruption at the time of the Algeciras business, instead of *condoning*! and said he could not much longer take the responsibility of leaving France on his frontier to corrupt his people.' Probably he spoke sincerely, but what do we see? I don't believe any Frenchman (except, of course, of the real criminal type) would do the horrors done constantly, and *allowed*, by German soldiers; and no French officer would pass such action. In this German *Kultur* we have again the famous Marquis de Sadé of the end of the eighteenth century, the diseased-minded, blood-enjoying, satiated voluptuary, whose habits made the adjective 'sadique,' and who was himself a reproduction of some of the worst Roman Emperors and Italian tyrants. It's the mixture of satiated over-culture and cruelty-for-cruelty's sake, which is amazing in these Germans, and foul filth-for-filth's sake. Marvellous! taking the trouble, for instance, to stuff human excrement into cupboards and chests of drawers, and even into tabernacles and on altars. This has been done in houses and churches of our own friends.

"Lord Bryce wrote to me yesterday, and, among other things, said how interested and surprised he was as to what Lolly repeated from me as to the state of North-East and East of France. Really, one would imagine that Belgium and France were in Mars! and at the Vatican it's the same: 'The Germans say it's not true,' but the only thing needful is to go and look! or to send, if you are the Pope. I hear from one after another of French officers the same story: 'Nous sommes las de passer par des pays dévastés, de voir les villages en flammes.' The husband of a niece of Madeleine says he has to go from one *coupe d'amer* to another, and is always in the worst parts. He says the Germans destroy to destroy and kill to kill; and, as to their crimes on women, it is inconceivable! Very old women and little children equally outraged. In a parish near here in Paris there are from North of France a mother of forty-five and her girls of sixteen and eighteen, all going to have babies from a German soldier who took them all three and left them thus!

The outraging has been done so systematically everywhere that the idea has occurred to me it may be to propagate a German race! As you must know, women and children have been swept away from villages into Germany. Why? The wholesale deporting of boys and elder men, for harvesting and to prevent their fighting, is understandable. I hope our British officers will be strict as to discipline, for I've heard in some districts the Tommies are not kept at all strictly from helping themselves to what they fancy. It's a very severe test, such a weary protracted suffering inch-by-inch war. How splendid Sir David Beatty's victory!"

Here the war letters ceased for a time.

There are two others which I think may fitly find a place at the end of this chapter. They are both of the nature of Confessions of Faith; and, as such, they reveal the serenity of mind which triumphantly supported Sophia under the double strain of national agony and of personal agony which she was about to be called upon to endure.

*Sophia to Mrs Hopkins.**

"La Muette,
"November 15, 1914.

"... God gave me a great grace. I did not know the war was coming, but the three weeks, just before, we were in London and I was able to communicate every day; and since we returned to France, for the first time since I married, I have been to Mass every day. (I could not get up early enough when I did not sleep.) Here in Paris, I can communicate regularly twice a week. It's such a blessing to me that God has made my mind quite peaceful and trustful over my odd religious situation. When I first came and for some years I minded it dreadfully. All my life I'd been living in the warmth and fullest energy of Church-life and work; and we all felt in the Church of England all which such as Hugh Benson said he only found in Rome. We grew up with people

* An American friend of Sophia, living in France.

whose whole being was aglow for the Kingdom of God, whose love for our Saviour was the meaning of their existence and sweetened and glorified it. The Blessed Sacrament was their centre and strength and joy. The Bible they were at home in and loved; the Prayer Book made their devotions. And I here felt like a leper for years! but gradually that passed; and when at Bourbilly I can't communicate, God feeds me marvellously in Spiritual Communions. Once or twice people have said in the earlier years that I should influence those around me much more if I left the Church of England. But no good ever comes from being untrue. God brought me here. It's His job! and He has done all. I believe absolutely in the Roman Catholic Church; if I did not, I should not believe in the Church of England! I know by studying long, long ago, how all happened; and, looking back, it was all so natural. I wish people had had more patience, and that the Pope had never allowed divorce at all, so Henry VIII. could not have hoped for it! but such a man as he was would have fallen out on something else. For all who are Romans, it's quite plain that the decisions of Rome are binding. But I was born in the Church of England, and with my experience personally of Sacramental Grace and of the spiritual life found and to be had, I am absolutely sure of the reality of the Orders and Sacraments; and, much as I wish I could communicate with this family, and specially my husband and the villagers, I could not, unless I left the Church of England to join Rome; and as, were I not married to a Frenchman or were I to live in England as a widow, I should prefer to be still Church of England, and should only join Rome because of communicating oftener and should feel obliged to say I had all I want in the Church of England—I can't change. I should if God told me to. I realize fully the anomalies in the Church of England and the weaknesses and drawbacks, which are chiefly the opposites in Rome. Just as the lacks in Rome are the best points of the Church of England. But to me the spiritual life and growth in the Church of England has shown the fact of Sacramental life. I am *perfectly* happy here; and apart from

communicating, I feel as much at home in Rome as in the Church of England. I know I shan't upset you at all in telling you all this. I do regret being separated from this family as to communicating, intensely. The Mass is such a joy and strength. What an awful initiation God is giving us into the depths of the Passion of Jesus."

Sophia to The Lord Stanmore and The Hon.
Nevil Gordon.*

"La Muette,
"December 27, 1914.

"MY DEAREST NEVIL AND JACK,

"This is for Christmas and a happy New Year. What a mercy we did not know the coming horrors a year ago, for the shadow would perhaps have hindered our capacity for receiving the peace and strength of the grace of God. 'My Peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.' 'The Peace of God which passeth all understanding.' Never did I so realize the wonderful fact of God's Peace. This war to me is no contradiction at all. The Angels sang not: 'Glory to God, on earth Peace, Goodwill *between* men for ever and ever on this earth, and a comfortable armchair existence,' but: 'Glory to God in the Highest' by the salvation of men, by the completing of His creative work, by its redemption and sanctification, by its complete ennobling; and even in the process, even in this world of sin, strife, struggle, suffering, death, Jesus brings Peace to men of goodwill, of honest, simple, believing hearts, who wish to be good, to do their duty, to know and love God, even if inarticulately. And never was this more evidently true than now.

"And the miracles of patience and peace in circumstances of appalling trial, in trench and hospital, are the Peace of God through Jesus our Lord.

"Of course charity perfected prevents quarrels and war, and for that all Christians must pray and try; but, surely, had Christ expected His coming in Bethlehem (the Incarnation) to act like a conjuror, and turn human beings *en masse* into harmless automata

* He succeeded his father (formerly Sir Arthur Gordon) in 1912.

(not holy, for holy implies intelligent response, effort and will) or into well-drilled Quakers, He, and those He prepared to teach His Gospel, would not have urged the necessity of love, patience and kindness, nor warned against greed, lust, envy, hatred; and, had our Lord planned a permanent Hague Conference, He would not have said, 'not as the world giveth.'

"It's most amusing how many quasi-Christians, Christian Scientists, New Thoughters, etc., patronize the Beatitudes, but have not sense enough to see the Beatitudes imply the hardest self-mastery, the entire self-abnegation, the *effort* after peace-making (unnecessary were there no sin), frank owning up to death, illness, sorrow, suffering in every form, trouble, disappointment, loss, acceptance of another judgment-seat than this world's and belief in that other world, which (as old Dr Johnson prayed) 'sets this world right.'

"'Blessed are ye that mourn' to me means facing facts, not shying or turning away. The Israelites who were bitten and looked at the Brazen Serpent were cured. And looking up at the Cross and seeing Him slain for the sins of the world, for my sins, for me; seeing death as truly awful, sad and painful, but *limited* by the death and victory of Jesus, seeing death as a fact; sin, pain, suffering, all, as part of the great tribulation we have to go through—we mourn, but are blessed as we find cleansing, healing, strength, dressing antiseptic to our soul's wounds; and as the Peace of God and the joy of the life to come invade us even as we mourn, we know our dead live, and that we shall have them and they, us, for ever."

CHAPTER XII

1915

(AGE : SIXTY-TWO TO SIXTY-THREE)

IN addition to her other anxieties, Sophia had, for many months, been gravely solicitous concerning the ill-health of her granddaughter, Mercédès de Gournay. In 1914, Mercédès was sent to Arcachon to undergo medical treatment there, and Sophia continued to pay her constant visits, which no degree of fatigue, pressure of work or discomfort of war-time travelling, were ever permitted to hinder. On February 9, 1915, she was expecting to make one of these periodical expeditions, when she had an unpleasant accident—a fall which shook her severely. She told nobody about it, lest her husband, hearing of it, should insist on her abandoning the idea of travelling. All the days she was at Arcachon she suffered disquieting pain ; but there, also, she kept her counsel. Mercédès afterwards described her visit, saying that she never betrayed any suffering, “she was perfectly calm and normal, so good, so delighted to see that I was better, telling me her impressions, her thoughts and a little of her anxieties ; always so wise and so full of confidence that I had no foreboding. Now I feel sure that she thought she would never see me again.”

Whether this surmise was true or not, as a fact it was the last occasion of Mercédès seeing Sophia.

The pain was so persistent that directly my sister returned home she went alone to see a great French surgeon, whose work among the wounded soldiers

had won her admiration. The result of his investigation came upon her with a shock, which her brave spirit bore without flinching. He informed her that the pain was caused by a cancer, which should be operated on immediately. Without hesitation, she bowed to his decision.

"I want immensely to outlive this war!" she announced to her family. "If God settles for me not to live I'm quite happy, only I'd much prefer to live on and help here. I enjoy it! That's the truth, despite this awful war; and I do want to see my jobs through. However, if I die, I know God will use me to do far more from the changed life."

And: "One great joy to me is to die, now or whenever I do, having become very happy in my transplanted life, loving dear Franquet and his family so much, and enjoying this very dear world here below more than ever. It's all so splendidly worth while. One feels Eternity throb through to this world. Yesterday, at a Mass for a soldier friend, his widow had the *Magnificat* sung at the end, and it was nice. That is just what one wants to say."

She wrote to tell us in words of indomitable courage, comparing the French custom of outspokenness (which she regarded with smiling approval) with the English custom of reticence concerning her disease—

"The doctors call it a tumour; I cancer! It's absolutely nothing if one says it; like the Brazen Serpent, it's nothing if one takes it full front, out loud! I never was afraid of it and never expected it, but as soon as I found it, I said to myself: 'Let's avoid mysteries!' My resolution was needless and it's Hobson's choice, as it certainly will not be kept hidden."

This proved to be the case, as, after the operation, every one of the grandchildren wrote her letters of sympathy upon it, and Monsieur de Franqueville told of her valour to all their friends—

"As if it were a Victoria Cross," Sophia explained. "Really there is a good side to this incomprehension as to any objection to speaking of my disease, for I say 'cancer' as one would say 'cold in the head'; and this awful war absolutely levels and places one's infinitesimal existence with the 'hairs and sparrows' which God knows, counts, provides and arranges for; and so one can wish for nothing better."

In this serene spirit she made all her preparations quickly and calmly. On the eve of the operation she spent some hours shopping for Mercédès, and enjoyed a long talk at tea-time with a friend of her girlhood, then making a short stay in Paris. "Who but Sophy would have done that!" remarked her friend afterwards. The 19th February, ten days after her journey to Arcachon, she went into the Nursing Home. That morning, at dawn, she had gone to St George's Church,* made her confession, communicated and returned home to attend Mass with her husband in their own chapel. The day was the twelfth anniversary of their marriage in that chapel. In the afternoon her heart-broken husband escorted her to the *Clinique* in the Rue de la Pompe, where her operation was to be performed on the following morning.

Sophia was delighted with her room. It was light, airy, tranquil; it looked upon a cloister with a grass-plot in the centre, and a big sky, between two blocks of houses, shone through her windows. She spent the afternoon in decorating her room with pots of lovely azaleas and violets given her by her step-daughters, and with a battalion of her best loved pictures, sketches, family photographs, books and crucifix, which she had brought with her to the amazement of Monsieur de Franqueville and of the Nursing Staff. Afterwards she wrote to us, telling us how—

* The English Church of St George, Rue Auguste Vacquerie, Paris.

"I arranged it all in case I did not die. Everything was so easy for me. As soon as I knew, I settled to do it at once, so had no time for anything but to clear up; and when I was in here, the night before, I was just in such perfect peace, like being entirely refreshed and renewed, like being in Heaven. And as soon as I'd said my prayers, I fell asleep and awoke as they came in to put me on the stretcher and inject something, and it all seemed so natural and not at all trying."

The operation, though successful, revealed the disease as deep-seated and of long-standing; a grave discovery which afforded little alleviation to our anxiety. Sophia faced it with her usual valour.

"It's the Parliament Bill's fault, and that class-against-class doing. As the vet. said at Bourbilly over a horse very ill: 'Ou elle se guerira *ou* elle va mourir, plus tôt *ou* plus tard!' If I die before Franquet, the thing will have come gently, and I can still help in many ways and, anyhow, give every one a cheerful feeling about such incidents up to the end."

Never, assuredly, was one of Wisdom's daughters more true to the standard of her race. "Steadfast, sure, free from care."

Her letters from the Nursing Home told of pain cheerily borne, of disturbed nights owing to Zeppelin raids, but of her rare good fortune—

"Certainly I am always lucky, for if one had to be operated on, the circumstances are ideal. I have still an excellent digestion, and with the least lessening of pain I enjoy everything so much. It's most providential I had no idea of my cancer sooner, as all has come out ideally. Franquet would never have had all the family with us; but there they are, and all are angelic and he is too, and all's well that ends well."

Her weakness was a trial, but to her delight she was encouraged to walk as soon as possible.

"Really," she wrote to me, "I would prefer being a Trappist for the present, as visits tire me. I see no one but Franquet and the step-daughters, who have all been angelic to me. The first morning after my operation, two Jesuits, three Abbés and Mr Cardew of St George's English Church all offered visits, and every kind of friend besides. I've sported my oak, I can tell you! What a mercy it's not a leg! for not to walk walks, particularly in the country, would be a trial."

And a few days later—

"I have read a lot. I am re-reading St Thomas Aquinas' 'Summa' after twenty years or more. He puts some of Bergson's points much better. St Chantal's life I re-read and love; *The Round Table*, Mrs Henry Wood's novels and newspapers. . . . Such a blessing is St George's Church, as they have the Reserved Sacrament, and when one's weak it's all the difference. Now I go every day and can communicate there. . . . I see in the *Times* the Chief Rabbi's account of the Kikuyu state of the English Church and Protestants at the Front: not my ideal! What follows has nothing to do with Kikuyu, but with soldiers and everybody. I more and more think one of the greatest achievements of the devil was knocking out (practically) Confession from the Church of England. But that we'll discuss if ever we meet. . . .

"The Germans are incalculable. A friend of ours, Marquise de Q—, had every cupboard, chest of drawers and bedroom and kitchen utensils, stuffed with human excrement by the officers and soldiers! This is the fifth house I know, and churches also, left thus!"

Sophia to The Earl of Selborne.

"March, 27, 1915.

"I enjoy your letter immensely. Your Blackmoor one was a joy. Spring: the catkins, palms, blushing birch, etc., always present to me at this time. In all eternity the joys and happiness of Blackmoor will be with me. From *L. s. d.* point of

view it was not a paying investment ; but anyhow, so far as I am concerned, I owe everything to Blackmoor. I am getting on very well every way, and though never free from pain, it gets less and less. I hope soon to see something of the thirty privates and ten officers now in this *Clinique*, but so far have no spare energy. When I go out in the Bois de Boulogne and see the mutilated, (and so young some), legs and arms and eyes missing, and *all* looking cheerful, I feel a homage to them, a humble, reverent admiration. . . . I regret agreeing with Dean Henson, but I do. Here in France, absinthe only is stopped. All the clergy drink wine, and grog is given to all wounded, and the surgeons and doctors tell me the rum in trenches is invaluable. Did you see the photo of German soldiers' graves with the cross at the head, and bordered by broken wine bottles ! So very suitable ! ”

Sophia to The Lady Laura Ridding.

“ April 13, 1915.

“ I see your dear Mrs Temple* has died in her sleep. How very comfortable (if you are in a state of grace, as Baxter says). The last time I saw her and William Temple they came to see me at La Muette years ago. He told me how the levity and scandalous posters (in Paris) struck him with horror. Now he would judge differently : it is very fine. The outstanding feature through Paris and most of France is sobriety and self-control. Everybody in every class are cheerfully and very quietly doing their best to help their country. There is an absence of nerves, excitement, quarrelling, jealousy and pleasure-seeking, a unity of all classes and opinions, an unselfconsciousness and absolute simplicity, which is what should be. There are relatively very few fools to be heard, no silly letters in the papers, and everybody have their muscles set for victory. It may be very far off, but it will be the end, and nothing else, of this struggle. You never hear any talk of revenge in cruelties or destruction, either among wounded soldiers or

* The widow of Archbishop Temple.

civilians, town or country. The absence of hate is remarkable. That there is profound mistrust is satisfactory; may it last after the war! I hope to get back to La Muette next week. I'm most comfy here, and it's such a retreat, but Franquet will be glad when I'm back, and I'm sorry to miss the dear daffodils, etc. I find resting is doing me good. I'm very well, but have not yet got strength."

On April 19, she returned to La Muette, to find the whole house radiant with flowers, "like a bridal bower," she described it. Her step-daughters knew her passionate love of flowers, and planned this exquisite welcome for her. The delight which it gave her was pathetic. A week later her husband took her to Cannes, where the sunshine and beauty brought healing refreshment, but no appreciable increase of strength.

Sophia to The Earl of Selborne.

"Grand Hotel, Cannes,
"April 30, 1915.

"A big farmer in the Marne, a Monsieur Berge, wrote a most striking account of his property and of that of his neighbours. It brought tears to one's eyes. He loves his land, his fathers cherished it, he had done much for it. He writes: 'It is irrecognizable. I cannot realize that it is my land. Not only is not one stone left on another, not only is every tree cut down, not only is not a landmark left, but the soil has gone; the level is changed; everywhere are great chasms and pits—immense—and piled-up earth. The ground has become lead. . . . We roam and roam—my family, neighbours and I—none can find the landmarks and home. You look around, and, far as eye can see, is the same featureless, hideous desolation; and you walk and walk and walk, and so it is wherever you look. To remove the shell, obus, etc., alone will be the work of years, unless we have enormous help, and to retrace our landmarks!'

"I am enchanted that the British contingent could

not join the Hague Conference. You saw that, for the sake of peace, no references were to be made to any atrocities or complaints of destruction. These must be left to history to decide the *reasons* !! Madame Adam's letter to Mrs. Fell: 'Are you really an Englishwoman?' was capital."

Sophia to The Lady Laura Ridding.

" May 27, 1915.

" I've just seen Willie announced for the Cabinet as Agriculture.* Had Unionists not been fully represented, I'd have preferred Willie not to join, but as it is, all is well. Redmond will remain a thorn, you'll see, despite Home Rule, or rather, because of it ! Demagogues remain matches, and are only safe when wisely used, or rather, remain incendiaries and are only a boon when lighting to give light or to burn refuse. I pray that the word Conscription be said immediately, no round-about's."

Sophia to The Earl of Selborne.

" Château de La Muette,
" July 1, 1915.

" I have not written because I had too much to say, and was always used up by the daily round here and the drain of this awful war. I am certain of our ultimate victory, but there is so much yet to sacrifice. In my head, night after night, I write to the *Times*; and, but for fear of your not approving or that it might, however slightly, annoy you, I should have done it, despite my want of energy: everything tires me too much to begin. Then Freda told me that, since I was out of England and married to a Frenchman, I had no weight and it was useless. She was right, but I still have some remains of the same disease as Mr Gladstone and the Kaiser! though less and less: still at times it flares up in me that one must cry out and it may help. It's inexplicable that the greatest manufacturing and engineering country in the world, except Germany, should take eleven months to begin to organize and the country not

* President of Board of Agriculture in the Coalition Government, 1915.

invaded! No one could expect it at the beginning of the war; but, here in France, with its richest departments as to minerals and factories in the hands of the enemy (except the Creusot, which, perhaps, is nearer Krupps than anything in England), from September, Millerand had all in hand. People we know, and who were as opposed as possible before, praise him highly. All the tiny lathes in France are registered, buildings, taken or built, to group individual workmen and to minimize inspection work; and a new examination of inspectors to get the best. In one very great workshop, Chatillon—Commentry, though there are very considerably fewer workmen, they produce 75 per cent. against 40 per cent. of before the war. They work eleven hours fiercely. Not one word is needed. All alike work for their country; and the men can't understand the English, how, with such an awful stake, they can haggle over wages and trades-union rules and rights, with Germany in its awful cruel power on the threshold. They think German spies must be the cause. Here, not a word is said against women or old or unskilled labourers: all are welcomed. I feel so grieved for the unjust impression as to British workmen. It's a blessing corruption has nothing to do with British shortage. I think the French very reasonable and patient, for you'll understand they hoped so much the new British Army would be fully in the field before now."

When July came, Sophia set her heart on going to Bourbilly. Conditions there had changed from those of the previous summer. The Department of the Côte-d'Or was no longer within the military zone, there was no longer danger of transport failing or of food scarcity, its inhabitants were not now haunted by terror lest the invaders should break through and swarm down upon them; but never before had there been more urgent need of consolation and encouragement among the villagers.

My sister felt very weak and at times suffered much pain; she probably realized that she was losing ground, but she would not hear of anything being different to other years; so the whole family (with

the exception of those who were fighting) spent the autumn at Bourbilly.

"I am glad we are here," she wrote directly after the move. "It's worth the fatigue, for these villagers are most awfully depressed. They don't sleep and look so aged. In our parish of three hundred and ten, so many killed, wounded, prisoners. In five houses, the only son and grandson killed, no one to inherit from these small cultivators. 'Tout ne fit rien. Tout est fini pour nous!' they say. It's heart-breaking."

Sophia to The Earl of Selborne.

"Bourbilly,
"August 19, 1915.

"Your news and Lolly's about Bobby * arrived together. The Euphrates sounds horrid, and I wish he and Luly could have remained together. Franquet thinks Bobby in safety in Mesopotamia compared with the Dardanelles or here in France. May he be right! You know how infinitely precious your children are to me. It seems to me I could not love them more were they my very own.

"The only word to describe the feeling for the British Army is adoring affection! and immense gratitude for British generosity pouring out help at every pore. But there is an unfair indignation and contempt (?) for the British who have *not* enlisted; and the supposed lack of patriotism shown in all these strikes and all the talk about employers' profits, has no effect at all! not even on Socialists. Here in France some people, a minority, are making money too. There are demagogues here who work for Caillaux, etc., with success, always urging: 'What has the North and East of France to do with us?' Still, thanks to Military Service, everywhere, the general atmosphere is wonderfully strong, calm and untalky. The Press (particularly the *Croix*, *Temps*

* Captain The Hon. Robert Palmer was sent on August 16, 1915, from India to take out a draft from the Hants Regiment at Agra to reinforce the 4th Hants at Nasiriya, on the Euphrates. He was killed in the battle of Um El Hannah, January 21, 1916.

and sometimes *Echo de Paris*) have most useful articles as to England."

"I have no moral worries," she wrote in September to Mabel Howick, "the war is so huge that one can only (in my feeble state) flop down with it at the Foot of the Cross; and outside the war nothing matters. Here we have the immense joy of ten children, all whirling about, shouting, laughing, radiantly gay."

And: "Everything goes swimmingly, the whole family is angelic, my Pierre so good; indeed, except for this awful war, it would be Heaven on Earth here now. This dear place is very restful, and I enjoy it immensely."

At the end of the summer, when the children and grandchildren were dispersing, she wrote to me telling me of—

"The perfectly perfect time we have had altogether at Bourbilly. All I wished for and prayed for has come true, and we've been so happy. The Belgian Abbé has been a huge success and help."

And to Mabel she wrote her last commentary on the lessons of the summer—

"When one is old, one understands all that matters with a most satisfying clearness—for the rest it is amusing, interesting, etc., but quite unimportant. One understands our Lord's words about becoming like little children. Not that they are necessarily or even generally very good, nor very clever, but that the ordinary child is ready to trust and take love if it is at all unselfish, genuinely unselfish and not tiresome. The ordinary child wants you to be free and interested in what it wants—and the dear God and Father of us all only asks for this kind of response from us."

October brought such increase of pain and weakness, that, to all except to Sophia herself, it became

evident that she would not be able to accomplish the return journey to Paris. However, she gave no indications of feeling any doubt about it. Whatever her private belief may have been as to her condition, she had no immediate expectation of death, neither had her doctor. Both thought that they saw before her a weary road of agony along which she must travel before she obtained relief.

Her unquenchable courage determined to persevere in her daily life, to relinquish none of her ordinary domestic duties, to walk, drive and see her friends so long as the last ounce of strength remained to her.

One of the greatest delights of the friendships contracted since her marriage was that woven with the family of the great historian, the Comte de Montalembert. As she explained to us—

“These dear people’s relationship with each other reminds me of our home and of its continuation at Blackmoor, as far as family love and intimacy is concerned. I *bask* in it. And they, having had a Forbes grandmother and great-grandmother,* have blood much enriched in my opinion! Every one of Montalembert’s daughters and grandchildren have more or less a British vein. I feel them English! and all jump to me and I to them in enjoying one another. I love them as if of my family.”

It was to one of these beloved friends, the Comtesse de Grunne, who lived at La Roche-en-Brénil, near Bourbilly, that Sophia paid the last visit she was able to accomplish. Her husband, General Le Comte de Grunne, after Sophia’s death, testified to the inspiring power of my sister’s fortitude in these touching words written to my brother-in-law—

“The remembrance of Madame de Franqueville,

* The father of the historian, René Comte de Montalembert, married a Miss Forbes, and his son, Charles, the historian, was born in London.

smiling in spite of her sufferings which she accepted with joy, will always remain in my mind. At a time when we should be ready to sacrifice our lives, I saw in her a picture of such courage before death as I trust God will give me should the sacrifice be demanded of me."

The exertions of that afternoon proved to have placed too great a strain on Sophia's frail strength. She paid for the effort by an attack of atrocious pain, and never afterwards left her room. There she lay, nursed by her faithful Elizabeth, and surrounded by all her special possessions: her books, her photographs, and the cabinet of china animals which had entertained generations of small visitors, and many other things which she loved because they had belonged to our father or mother, or reminded her of Blackmoor.

Comte Willy de Grunne, who came to see her before returning to his duties in London, at the Belgian Legation, found her very weak. "You are going to England," she said, with tears in her eyes; "I shall never see England again."

"I can't help being most British, but I admire and love France more than I can say!" were the last words of the last letter which she wrote to me.

Despite her yearning for her country and family and our pressing desire to see her once more, she would not allow us to come to Bourbilly, but insisted on our delaying our visit until her return to La Muette. She talked a great deal with Madeleine Darcy, who was remaining still at Bourbilly, of the joy with which she was looking forward to her time in Paris, because she would be able to communicate at St George's. She was silent about her sufferings, and never gave sign or word that she thought her death was near.

Meanwhile the waves of pain and weakness crept higher and higher, submerging the alleviations with which her husband's tender devotion had tried to surround her. His bulletins were so alarming that

Mabel Howick determined to hurry to Bourbilly, rather venturing to risk her aunt's displeasure than to delay her visit longer.

While Mabel was speeding across France as quickly as war train-service would permit, the family and household at Bourbilly were praying that Sophia might be spared the agony awaiting her. That night she died. In the early hours of October 28, in her sleep, her hand within that of her beloved husband, without pain or consciousness, she passed from life here on to the fuller life beyond. The old curé, who slept in the house, was hastily summoned by Monsieur de Franqueville, and he gave her absolution *in extremis*; but she was already dead.

The *Vicaires Généraux* (then administering the vacant See of Dijon) gave striking testimony to the reverence in which they held my sister's faith and religious zeal by granting permission to her devoted friend, the parish curé, Abbé Emery, to conduct her burial service with hardly any restrictions.

The funeral was on October 30, a melancholy day of autumn mist, when the skies and woods she loved so ardently seemed touched with the sorrow which lapped the whole countryside. Her niece Mabel, the sole representative of her own family, was deeply moved by the poignant sorrow of the large crowd of friends, rich and poor, great and humble, who gathered round the grave. The venerable white-haired Abbé led the little procession through the village, which was full of mourning. After her body was laid in the consecrated grave under the shadow of the old church tower, the funeral service was celebrated in the parish church, full to overflowing. There was no pretence or dissimulation about the universal grief; and the weeping of the villagers and servants was touching in the extreme.

“*Nous avons perdu une mère*,” was how they spoke of their loss. “*C’était une véritable Sainte!*” said the Abbé Emery.

Another of Sophia's friends among the curés of the neighbouring villages wrote a beautiful account of the service in the local paper, speaking of her as "venerated in the deepest manner by the whole neighbourhood, possessed by a passion for duty, afire with interest in the spiritual work of the parish, sustained by admirable faith and generous love, which sent its beams far and wide." He added that she claimed to be, "vraiment Catholique. . . Si, de droit, elle etait hors du *corps* de l'Eglise, de fait, par ses vertus, elle appartenait sûrement a son *âme*."

In this story of my sister's life I have tried to give the portrait of a brave, generous, talented woman. Her character was not complex or subtle. To paint it truly, simple clear strokes seemed the right ones to employ, without any attempt to convey hints in attitude or surroundings which might suggest this lurking possibility of mood or that hidden attribute. Her character was built out of three principal constituents, one or other of which came to the surface under different circumstances of her life.

Sophia was always herself conscious of the permanence of many childish characteristics within her nature. To the end, she retained the instincts of an imaginative child for dramatic emotions, mystic impressions, an inexhaustible capacity for enjoyment, and longing for the supreme affection of those she loved.

Then years developed in her certain characteristics of a noble woman: a steadfast sense of duty and self-sacrifice, an ardour for great causes, a craving for knowledge and intellectual enrichment, delight in beauty and deep devotion to her family and friends.

And, lastly, God marked her with some of the tokens of His Saints: thirst for His Love and for Communion with Him, an intense love for children and the poor and simple, a passionate desire to save souls and to bring help to the hard pressed, to sufferers and to sinners.

A character such as my sister's radiates its influence on all around her. She once wrote of another of God's torch-bearers words which I may fitly use to describe the effect of her own life in the world. She said—

“Truly the answering fealty of a whole nature to its God and Saviour and Revealed Truth and the Church, such fealty and unsparing effort of following and loving, is a great Achievement. And such duty to God must also have its effect among men in its contribution to the Regeneration going on.”

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